THE ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD Princess Elizabeth covered a manuscript volume that she presented as a gift to her stepmother Katherine Parr in 1544 with an embroidered sleeve or chemise, for which she, apparently, had done the needlework. (1) Embroidered in bright turquoise blue and decorated with an interlaced design picked out in still-shiny silver thread, the volume makes an elaborate gift, with Katherine's initials, "K.P.," raised up in cotton batting-stuffed relief in the center of both back and front covers. Raised-work embroidered silver flowers are at each of the four corners, probably pansies, forming a pun on the French word for thoughts, "pensees." The French pun is appropriate because the manuscript is of Elizabeth's translation of Marguerite de Navarre's Miroir de l'Ame Pecheresse [The Mirror or Glass of the Sinful Soul]. More cotton batting is used to raise cord-marks on the book's spine, as if the embroidered cover were part of the manuscript's actual binding, allowing the book to mimic authorship of a bound manuscript volume such as one might find in a library.

Paradoxically, the contrast between the smooth, nearly professional perfection of the goblin-stitched embroidery in its elaborate interlaced design and the rather awkward italic printing of the manuscript itself, if it does not betray the hand of a more mature sewing teacher, reveals that even for royally born Elizabeth, the needle was a far more practiced instrument in her eleven-year-old hand than the pen. (2) She had not yet come under the tutelage of Roger Ascham, who, after age fourteen, had a pronounced effect on her handwriting. Perhaps the most important aspect of this object—which may help us to understand how the embroidery assists rather than detracts from her writerly authority—is that she dedicated the volume to her stepmother. Such a dedication may be no more than an attempt to please a queen of pronounced Protestant sympathies by translating the work of another, but it is uncanny that the text of this translated poem, sent from one female family member to another, covered in a personally worked textile, results in a gesture that looks oddly like the trade in woven heirloom items that Annette Weiner finds generic to female communities and that, she has brilliantly argued, requires us to revise our sense of the "traffic in women" outlined by Levi-Strauss and Marcel Mauss. (3) Indeed, using Weiner's theory of "inalienable possessions" as central to her understanding of the function of some gift-giving in Elizabethan society, Lisa M. Klein has argued that 1544 was the year Elizabeth had been established in the succession by an act of Parliament, although she was still illegitimate. (4) As a gift to a female member of her father's family—in which Elizabeth now had a slightly more secure place—the woven nature of the object calls attention to its inalienable status. (5) Klein never discusses the actual contents of Elizabeth's translation (her concern is for the embroidery), but the central trope of incest insists upon the endogamous withholding from circulation of the female speaker. Elizabeth's one remark about the content of the translation insists upon multiple intimacies:

The which book is entitled, or named, The Mirror or Glass of the Sinful Soul, wherein is contained how she (beholding and contemplating what she is) doth perceive how of herself and of her own strength she can do nothing that good is, or prevaleth for her salvation, unless it be through the
grace of God, whose mother, daughter, sister, and wife by the scriptures she proveth her self to be. (6)

Such a metaphor speaks directly against the traffic in women that, according to Levi-Strauss, the incest taboo was supposed to protect: the textual content of a woman-to-woman gift of cloth, as Weiner has further suggested, and the endogamous status of the object indicate Elizabeth's very youthful self-citing at an anthropologically very powerful position for a female. (7)

We usually understand the pen and needle to be opposed in the protofeminist discourse of the Renaissance, of course, but here, in Elizabeth's first production, the pen and needle go together in a first gesture of intrafamilial authorship. Indeed, Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass have recently argued that far from confining women, embroidery and sewing, especially in an aristocratic setting, were means for artistic display: "Whatever repressive and isolating effects sewing as a disciplinary apparatus might have been intended to produce, women used it both to connect to one another within domestic settings and to articulate public roles for themselves in the outer world." (8)

Nothing expresses the claims for female agency possible to make for embroidery and sewing more clearly than the cloth-draped interior of Hardwick Hall. Covering as much interior surface as the famous windows by Smythson--by which the house is known through its jingle, "Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall"--the embroideries and other cloth hangings made by Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, her women, and her professional male embroiderers, are often of militant female virtues as well as more passive kinds. One set of very large applique hangings--made from recycled ecclesiastical cloth bought by two of Elizabeth's husbands during the dissolution of the monasteries--celebrates famous historical women along with their personified virtues: Zenoia (Maganimit and Prudence), Penelope (Patience and Perseverance), Lucretia (Chastity and Liberality), Cleopatra (Fortitude and Justice), Artemisia (Constancy and Pietas--Aeneas's heroic virtue). Other panels represent various female allegorical virtues conquering famous tyrants: Faith squashing Mahomet, Hope against Judas, Temperance conquering Sardanapalus. (9) The Hardwick Hall records reveal that in 1591-92 Bess gave Elizabeth's embroiderer a large sum of money to work pieces for a gown for the Queen; such payments are perhaps in lieu of the actual cloth that may have been given at various other times (Levey, 36).

Elizabeth's manuscript sleeve is on a much smaller scale than these gifts, of course; but it is clear that its transferral is the beginning of the object's familiar circulation which will work to increase (or decrease) the creator's reputation. (10) The eleven-year-old Elizabeth asks Katherine to keep the volume private, at least until its faults have been corrected: "But I hope that after having been in Your Grace's hands there shall be nothing in it worthy of reprehension and that in the meanwhile no other (but your highness only) shall read it or see it, lest my faults be known of many" (112). In essence asking for collaborative correction, Elizabeth fearfully expects that many will read the volume and, while not exactly assuming "publication" thereby, she reveals her concern for the performance as one by which she will be judged. One of the faults about which she worries is clearly her understanding of the French she has translated, but it is the entire object, including the embroidery, which would have been displayed by the Queen when she offered it to another reader. Elizabeth's needlework as well as her verbal mastery are both on display in the gift. At eleven she would not have known, of course, that the text would be reprinted five separate times throughout her reign; its reproduction in print means that the text ceases to be a private and inalienable object--but for all that it does not cease to work to increase the authority of Elizabeth and of the women whose writing it accompanies in the massive
compilation in which it appears in 1582, Thomas Bentley's three-volume Monument of Matrons (later expanded to five volumes). In a very real sense, this print version of the text merely replicates in monumentally public form the authority the embroidery-covered object implicitly had within it.

Notes


2. Alfred Fairbank and Berthold Wolpe, in Renaissance Handwriting: An Anthology of Italic Scripts (London, 1960), 67, argue that Elizabeth was at the time a student of the writing tutor Jean Belmain, and that Ascham and Grindal only influenced but did not radically change her elegant hand. See figures 2 and 3.

3. Annette Weiner, Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving (Calif., 1992); see especially chapter 2, "Reconfiguring Exchange Theory."


5. See Klein, p. 465.


10. Susan Frye, "Sewing Connections: Elizabeth Tudor, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth Talbot, and Seventeenth-century Anonymous Needleworkers," in Maids and Mistresses: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England (Oxford: 1999), 165-82, emphasizes the differences between Elizabeth Tudor's girlhood embroidery and Elizabeth Talbot's heroic wall hangings; without an appreciation of the theoretically powerful incestuous content of the translated text, it is difficult to see the similarities between the two Elizabeths' needlework. For further discussion see "The Case of Elizabeth" in my Incest and Agency: Female Authority in the Renaissance (forthcoming).

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Introduction

In the little houses the tenant people sifted their belongings and the belongings of their fathers and of their grandfathers. Picked over their possessions for the journey to the west....The men were ruthless because the past had been spoiled, but the women knew how the past would cry to them in the coming days.... When everything that could be sold was sold...still there were piles of possessions;....The women sat among the doomed things, turning them over and looking past them and back. This book. My father had it. He liked a book.... Got his name in it. And his pipe—still smells rank.... Think we could get this china dog in? Aunt Sadie brought it from the St. Louis Fair. See? Wrote right on it.... Here's a letter my brother wrote the day before he died.... No, there isn't room. How can we live without our lives? How will we know it's us without our past?

John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath

This book has its origins in my first ethnographic fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands located off the coast of Papua New Guinea that, early in this century, took on unprecedented anthropological importance through Bronislaw Malinowski's research and personal renown. Malinowski reduced the extensive exchange events he witnessed to a simplified but pioneering classification of “gift” and “countergift,” theorizing that reciprocity was the basis for social relations in “primitive” societies. My research, beginning sixty years later, revealed dynamic social actions far more socially dense than Malinowski's classic conclusions. While comparing what I found in the Trobriands with analogous situations in more politically hierarchical Polynesian societies, I realized how deeply his assumptions were grounded in nineteenth-century evolutionary beliefs about the communal nature of “primitive” economics. The “norm of reciprocity” is, in actuality, a theory of economic behavior whose anthropological tenets were shaped centuries earlier. During the rise of capitalism, the give and take of reciprocity took on an almost magical, sacred power among Western economists. In the eighteenth century, Adam Smith and others argued that
reciprocal relations operated in the marketplace sui generis, keeping the market equitable and stable without external legal controls. A century later, this same belief in reciprocity as a regulatory mechanism was described for “primitive” societies when it was thought that “natives” lived without governing bodies or legal codes. There the gift given and received kept groups socially and politically stable without recourse to government or law. This trust in the motivation behind “primitive” reciprocity persisted so that confidence in how the norm worked in the exchanges of thousands of seemingly inconsequential gifts enabled anthropologists, beginning with Malinowski, to determine fixed, rational criteria for the reciprocal acts they recorded ethnographically. But these criteria, thought to be more scientifically and theoretically sound, also were culture bound so that, over time, it remained even more difficult to perceive how Western economic rationalities were being imposed on theories of other cultures' economic systems.

The acceptance of gender ideologies fundamental to capitalist systems introduced other formidable problems for anthropological theory. Analytical dichotomies, such as stasis/change, nature/culture, and domestic/public, always identified women with the supposedly negative side. Theories grounded in ethnographic descriptions of “gift exchange” among men served to affirm and legitimate men's autonomous control in economic and political pursuits. Women, though physically present, were seen but ignored as active participants in their own right. Even their own productive efforts that supported or enhanced a society's economy were discounted. In many societies throughout the world, however, women are the producers and, in part or wholly, the controllers of highly valued possessions—a currency of sorts made from “cloth.” Intricate symbolic meanings semantically encode sexuality, biological reproduction, and nurturance so that such possessions, as they are exchanged between people, act as the material agents in the reproduction of
social relations. Most important, cloth possessions may also act as transcendent treasures, historical documents that authenticate and confirm for the living the legacies and powers associated with a group's or an individual's connections to ancestors and gods. Historically, women's control over these arenas has accorded them powers associated with magical potency, sacred prerogatives, political legitimacy, and life-giving and life-taking social controls. Although Simone de Beauvoir asserted that gender is a "historical situation" and that biological reproduction is surrounded by historically constructed (negative) conventions and meanings, neither she nor other feminists attend to the political significance of women's complex roles in these cosmological domains.

Other objects, however, such as shell, stone, precious metals, or even human bones that are usually associated with men's wealth, contain similar symbolic referents to biological and cosmological phenomena. And in these cases, the ethnographic literature abounds with classifications in which men's actions are privileged because they are connected to the sacred domain whereas women's similar activities are relegated to a profane category. These interpretive discrepancies illuminate the pervasiveness of Western thought where women's participation in biological reproduction and nurturance are fetishized with negative value. But when the commingling rather than the oppositions between female and male symbol systems is seriously considered, we find that women's control over political and cosmological situations and actions can be beneficent or malevolent, matching the ambiguous potential of men's control and power. This view also reveals the sociopolitical ramifications of how women and men are, at the same time, accorded and deprived of authority and power. Men's autonomy is held in check, undermined, supported, confounded, or even, at times, superseded by women's economic presence.

The subject of this book is not women per se but an attempt to cast off some of the most cherished precepts in social theory and, in so doing, establish a new practice for comparative ethnographic description and explanation. Ethnographic data cannot be easily pared down to a single semantic marker that encodes reciprocity. Possessions are
given, yet not given. Some are kept within the same family for generations with retention not movement, bestowing value. Ironic ambiguities exist in the games people play, in the perverse strategies they employ, and in the complex symbols they use. In practice, kinship is a decisive marker and maker of value, not in terms of genealogical rules or norms of behavior, but because certain basic productive resources express and legitimate social relations and their cosmological antecedents in spite of all the exigencies that create loss. The reproduction of social relations is never automatic, but demands work, resources, energy, and the kind of attention that continually drains resources from more purely political endeavors. Just as a nation's international economic policies are held in check by the powerful demands and strategies of, for example, the country's auto makers, agrofarmers, and oil producers, so too, in local situations, the demands of wives on husbands, sisters on brothers, and one generation on another, tilt production and exchange in directions that limit wider coalitions.

When we acknowledge that so-called secondary domestic values such as biological reproduction and nurturance as well as the “magical” values of cosmologies and gods underwrite economic and political actions, then the traditional public/domestic boundaries break down. Social theory must account for exchange events that acknowledge women's possessions and social actions as much as men's. The division of labor is not simply a dual gender construct, but encompasses the attention and effort that both women and men give to production and to those cosmologies that disguise the unresolvable tensions, problems, and paradoxes that make up social life. Cosmologies are the cultural resources that societies draw on to reproduce themselves. But these resources are not merely ideologies, located outside the production of material resources. The traditional dichotomy between cosmology or superstructure and the material resources of production and consumption leaves little space to explore the cultural constructions by which the reproduction of the authority vested in ancestors, gods, myths, and magical properties plays a fundamental role in how
production, exchange, and kinship are organized. To emphasize and overcome this problem, I use the term cosmological authentication to amplify how material resources and social practices link individuals and groups with an authority that transcends present social and political action. Because this authority is lodged in past actions or representations and in sacred or religious domains, to those who draw on it, it is a powerful legitimating force. As Thomas O. Beidelman pointed out a long time ago, “one must understand the cosmology of the people involved so that one has some idea of what they themselves believe that they are doing.” Ethnographically, the people involved attest to the primacy and power of cosmological phenomena. For the Swazi, an intrinsic reproductive essence lies at the center of the Incwala royal rituals; Australian Aborigines claim that the a priori essentialness of their social life is constituted in The Dreaming; Polynesians consider that the efficacy of procreative power can only be found in the magical potency of mana.

Of course, only to follow Polynesians' explanations is to elevate cosmology to a level of first principles, returning us to the Durkheimian position that all social life comes into being through the sacred, cosmological domain. For Emil Durkheim, the maintenance of the sacred—totemism as the case in point—was unambiguous, generating social solidarity that resulted in a homogeneous order. Like the norm of reciprocity, Durkheim believed that the sacred domain functioned as a totality never needing external control. A traditional Marxist position equally circumscribes cosmological phenomena as unproblematic because the sacred domain supports ideologies that function only to mystify and disguise domination and subversion. How then can we account for the symbolic and material complexities prefigured by distinctions and discriminations associated with gender when historically women have held claims to authority through their power over cosmological authentication?
First, we must acknowledge that cosmologies act directly on social life mediating and, at the same time, fomenting society's most unresolvable problems. Second, we must see how power is constituted through rights and accesses to these cosmological authentications that give value to certain kinds of possessions which are fundamental to the organization of exchange. And third, because through exchange the cosmological domain becomes a significant source of power, its ambiguity and precariousness create difference, not homogeneity.

Unfortunately, much of the history of anthropological theory has been a search for universals, a positivist approach that would discover rules of descent, the incest taboo, totemism, or reciprocity and then elevate these norms to a privileged position. Yet it is the paradoxes of social life that contain the seeds of first principles—those duplicities and ambiguities that create tensions that can only be ameliorated and never resolved. Exchange acts fuel these tensions because all exchange is predicated on a universal paradox—how to keep-while-giving.

In the closing paragraph of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Claude Lévi-Strauss describes a universal dream expressed in an Andaman Island myth which tells of “a world in which one might keep to oneself” and escape from the “law of exchange.” Turning his back on Durkheim's primacy of myth and ritual to project his own scientifically determined structural model, Lévi-Strauss dismisses this myth as fantasy—and so undercuts the very precept by which exchange value is determined.

**The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving**

Some things, like most commodities, are easy to give. But there are other possessions that are imbued with the intrinsic and ineffable identities of their owners which are not easy to give away. Ideally, these inalienable possessions are kept by their owners
from one generation to the next within the closed context of family, descent
group, or dynasty. The loss of such an inalienable possession diminishes the self and by extension, the group to which the person belongs. Yet it is not always this way.
Theft, physical decay, the failure of memory, and political maneuvers are among the irrevocable forces that work to separate an inalienable possession from its owner.
We all are familiar with the crowns of queens and kings—the signs and symbols of authority and power—or antique furniture and paintings that proclaim a family's distinguished ancestry. From environmental concerns for the future of the world's rain forests to the political controversies generated over the return of the Parthenon's Elgin marbles to Greece, certain things assume a subjective value that place them above exchange value. When a Maori chief brandishes a sacred cloak she is showing that she is more than herself—that she is her ancestors. This is the power of cosmological authentication. The chief incorporates her ancestors' fame, their rank, and their authority unto herself; her guardianship of the cloak accords her that right. In a similar way, a noted Japanese Noh performer told me that when he dons the Noh mask of Okina, he becomes not like the god, but is the god. Gregory Bateson long ago saw the problems inherent in a functional or structural theory of reciprocity. His formulation of schismogenesis based on his Iatmul fieldwork was an attempt to find the “governor” that prevented the constant giving and receiving in an exchange or ritual event from spinning out of control. In fact, inalienable posses-

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sions that groups and individuals hold dear to them act as that governor. Inalienable possessions do not just control the dimensions of giving, but their historicities retain for the future, memories, either fabricated or not, of the past. Not always attainable, keeping some things transcendent and out of circulation in the face of all the pressures to give them to others is a burden, a responsibility, and at best, a skillful achievement.
Even though permanence for all time is an impossibility, individuals and groups work with exacting care to recreate the past for the present so that what they do in the present affects the future. As the Spanish philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo, observed, “reason builds on such irrationalities.” Unamuno believed that human beings “live in memory and by memory” and that the basis of social life was “the effort of our memory to persist…to transform itself into our future” even in the face of our foreboding of death. Sigmund Freud, of course, had a much more pessimistic view of how the unconscious urge toward death directs human actions. More recently, contra Freud, Ernest Becker argues that the very fear of death haunts us from birth, motivating us toward acts of heroism that give us “a feeling of primary value, of cosmic specialness, of ultimate usefulness to creation, of unshakable meaning.” Examples of heroic ventures through which individuals strive for immortality in efforts to deny death fill the pages of people's histories. These acts of “heroism” manifest themselves in behaviors as diverse as the enactment of a first birth ritual, the building of a pyramid, the recitation of a genealogy, the naming of a college dormitory, or the carving of a totem pole.

The motivation for keeping-while-giving is grounded in such heroic dynamics—the need to secure permanence in a serial world that is always subject to loss and decay. Enormous energy and intensity are expended in efforts to transmute or transcend the effects of deterioration and degeneration and/or to foster the conditions of growth and regeneration. Therefore, attention to regenerating or recreating the past is neither random nor inconsequential. Historical consciousness is promoted; change is disguised. Situations of political revolution or rebellion, where hierarchy is so developed that one segment of the society revolts, appear to be exceptions. Yet when the victors claim leadership, they immediately constitute their legitimation through the creation of symbols that stand for the past. Consider how the leaders of the T'ang dynasty used regalia from earlier times to fabricate their genealogical connections to former rulers.

In much the same way, Joseph Stalin
used V. I. Lenin's body to create an inalienable monument that helped legitimate his legal right to rule, whereas following the revolution, all heirs to the Tzar were shot, their buried bodies exhumed, their bones burned, crushed, and scattered to prevent any relic from ever reemerging as the rallying point for a counterrevolution. Even small groups expend enormous efforts and resources, for example, to convince a younger generation to beware of loss, to preserve relationships, and to guard sacred possessions. In Ian Dunlop's fascinating films on Baruya male initiation, young men, dressed in thick layers of women's fibrous skirts which scratch their legs, are told by the older men that the skirts scratch them as a reminder never to forget the women; their task as adults is always to protect them. Later, in what is the most self-reflexive part of the film, the Baruya men uncover an ancient stone axe blade. Turning to the anthropologist, Maurice Godelier, the Baruya leader says that they have kept this most precious possession secret from him all the years that he has lived with them. Now they reveal it and in so doing, disclose their true social identities. Unlike other possessions, the axe blade embodies their ancestors' histories. Such moments capture the determination to defeat change by substituting an icon of permanence even if manifested in a Baruyan axe blade, an Australian sacred ancestral tjurunga stone, or a Maori ruler's woven cloak. The paradox inherent in the processes of keeping-while-giving creates an illusion of conservatism, of refashioning the same things, of status quo. Although possessions, through their iconographies and histories, are the material expressions of “keeping,” the most that such possessions accomplish is to bring a vision of permanence into a social world that is always in the process of change. The effort to make memory persist, as irrational as the combat against loss can be, is fundamental to change. The problems inherent in “keeping” nurture the seeds of change.

**The Paradox of Permanence and Loss**

Anthropologists have labored long over the question of change in human societies. Lévi-Strauss, for example, subverted the issue by defining entropy as the hidden
“purpose” of culture crystallized in his image of the “primitive” bricoleur continually refabricating different versions of the same thing—what Robert Murphy terms Marxism.” Marshall Sahlins, recognizing that change must be accommodated in any dynamic structuralist theory, shows change as the central feature of how the cultural order reproduces itself. But in his examples of Polynesians' reactions to Western contact, Sahlins is not completely disengaged from his earlier evolutionary framework. Following LéviStrauss's metaphorical distinction between “hot” and “cool” societies, Sahlins maintains that differences in social complexity can be equated with a society's responsiveness to stasis or change. Implicit for Sahlins (and much more explicit for LéviStrauss) is that some groups, such as Australian Aborigines, are closed to change, merely replicating the same things through time. In “ranking” societies where history is more formalized and rank accommodated through lengthy genealogies, Sahlins shows much more dynamically that “the cultural order reproduces itself in and as change.”

In the first volume of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Marx emphasizes how continuity in the conditions of production cannot be achieved without the necessary conditions for reproduction, thereby underscoring how change stands as a constant threat to reproducing surplus value. For example, in the long-term maintenance of relations between capitalists and wage-laborers, both parties must deal with dislocating circumstances, such as external immigration policies and markets for raw materials and internal conditions of the housing and training of workers. Even wars, famine, and public opinion were among the events that Marx enumerated. To minimize change, to respond to shifting situations rapidly, to prevent workers from controlling their own destinies are some of the social conditions that must be attended to so that change can be incorporated into the reproduction of the relations of production. The opposition between change and stasis when applied to a division between “egalitarian” and “ranking” societies obscures the more fundamental problem that Marx identified. In reproducing kinship relations and
political alliances in small-scale societies, change also is a condition that must be worked against. How these societies reproduce the past for the future in and through loss is the key question. In one sense, an inalienable possession acts as a stabilizing force against change because its presence authenticates cosmological origins, kinship, and political histories. Yet the possession may be the very symbol of change as those in the top ranks of a society may combat change by reconstructing or fabricating genealogies or sacred chronicles in order to identify themselves with the possessions of earlier leaders or dynasties. In other cir-

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cumstances, those further down may well fight for change, invoking connections to other, more obscure symbols. In Gandhi's struggle for India's national independence, he invoked the hand spinning of a traditional cloth called khadi, what Nehru later called Gandhi's "livery of freedom." Both the act of spinning and the wearing of khadi elicited a complex symbolism, reasserting women's traditional productive domain and uniting women and men against the economic tyranny of Manchester's manufactured cottons and the political hegemony of British rule. When we take such possessions as a serious subject of study, teasing apart their histories and how their subjective value is constituted, we find that such possessions, as they move in time and space, become the carriers of more information and greater authority than other kinds of things. Control over their meanings and transmission from one generation to the next accords authority to their owners.

The power generated by this authority reveals a further ambiguity in the nature of inalienable possessions. Because each inalienable possession is subjectively unique, its ownership confirms difference rather than equivalence. Exchange does not produce a homogeneous totality, but rather is an arena where heterogeneity is determined. Although individuals or groups negotiate with each other on many levels in each exchange encounter, the ownership of an inalienable possession establishes and signifies marked differences between the parties to the exchange. The possession not only authenticates
the authority of its owner, but affects all other transactions even if it is not being exchanged. For the possession exists in another person's mind as a possible future claim and potential source of power. If I possess a sacred cloth, in Walter Benjamin's terms, its “aura” extends to my other possessions as well because my social identity, rank, or status is legitimated by my possession of one sacred object. Such ownership gives me authority that operates in other transactions so that my ability “to keep” empowers my ability to attract. In other words, things exchanged are about things kept.

The paradoxical tension created by keeping-while-giving exists at the root of all attempts to defeat loss. To overcome the destructiveness of loss, individuals and groups devise myriad ways of disguising the impermanence of social life. But these are not benign efforts to counterbalance death. They are grounded in exchange arenas where difference in the present is affirmed whereas difference in the past is disguised. These are the dynamics in which inalienable possessions are empowered to act as the source of difference and hierarchy. The strategies and negotiations surrounding inalienable possessions acknowledge the complementarity, the domination, and the subversive tactics that, taken together, show the extent or limitations in transforming difference into rank and hierarchy. In this way, inalienable possessions are the representation of how social identities are reconstituted through time. The reproduction of kinship is legitimated in each generation through the transmission of inalienable possessions, be they land rights, material objects, or mythic knowledge. These possessions then are the most potent force in the effort to subvert change, while at the same time they stand as the corpus of change. Among Australian Aboriginal groups, The Dreaming provides the means through which parts of ceremonies, sacred names, songs, and body designs are given to others, creating a strong sense of relatedness among dispersed, widely distant groups of people. But some individuals attain more sacred knowledge than others, so that even with a strong egalitarian ethos, difference enters into
each encounter. Whatever exchanges occur between elders and younger kin are influenced by the fact that elders hold the inalienable possessions—sacred stones, ceremonies, totemic designs, and names—giving them authority because others desire what they have. In this way, the Aboriginal cosmology is a fertile source of inalienable possessions that are guarded, inherited, sometimes lost, and at times, conceived anew. In general, cosmologies are active forces in social life that, in mediating systems of meaning, also entail material or verbal objectifications that actively become the agents or instruments of change. Thus the bricoleur mystifies change in order to create and participate in change. Birth, decay, and death are the natural phenomena and the wellspring out of which difference emerges. Inalienable possessions are powerful because they represent and encompass these primary sources making difference a potential threat and a tangible reality. But even though inalienable possessions are dominant politically, they are not simply under the control of men. Women, too, are centrally involved in their production and guardianship as well as their cosmological authentication. Maori cloaks, woven by women, symbolize women's rights to ancestral prerogatives and the legitimization of rank for women and men. Australian Aboriginal hairstrings, an important component of ceremonial life, are often produced and exchanged by women. The list of such involvement by women in production and ex-

change is lengthy, yet ignored in exchange theories. At the core of the paradoxical tensions over keeping-while-giving is the problem of gender.

**The Paradox of Reproduction and Gender**

Great strides have been made over the past twenty years in the anthropology of gender, but it still remains difficult to overcome functionalist or structuralist theories that claim to govern social practice from above while associating gender with categorical definitions or single symbolic systems grounded in ranked oppositional
patterns. What generates such a long historical attachment to these theoretical positions is that, to date, studies of gender have been uncritical in their acceptance of the primacy of a norm of reciprocity. Exchange theories reveal strongly entrenched gender biases because the relevant subject matter remains what males exchange between one another. For me, my first question in the Trobriands was, would Malinowski have ignored Trobriand women's banana leaf wealth if men had produced and exchanged it? Subsequently, I saw the same bias repeated in other societies, most notably in relation to the multiplicity of symbols, possessions, and exchange events associated with sexuality and reproduction.

In the 1960s, John Murra argued that Peruvian fabrics provided the economic basis as tribute and treasure for the rise of Inka civilization. But even with this example of cloth produced by women, the production and accumulation of such wealth has never been considered an essential resource in theories of political evolution. In cases where fabrics are manufactured wholly or largely by men, cloth still is considered by anthropologists as a subsidiary resource, a soft object whose symbolic meanings relate to cosmology, ancestors, birth and death, and the woman's side of things. Against the hard currencies of gold, silver, or shells that anthropologists usually define as encapsulating individual heroic exploits, clan political prestige, or the groom's side in marriage, cloth wealth, like the economic presence of women, fades in analytical importance. But the recent volume of essays. Cloth and Human Experience, shows how politically vital cloth can be in cultures ranging from chieftaincies to large-scale class societies, as such possessions provide repositories of wealth to be kept as well as to be given away. Although on a global scale and over several centuries women played a larger role than men in cloth production, any universalizing between gender and hard and soft wealth excludes how much men are involved with and dependent upon cloth treasures. Similarly, women's symbolic and social involvement in
the circulation and guardianship of hard substances, such as jade, shells, or even ancestral bones, at times intersects with men's political actions. The analysis of cloth reveals more than the complex interweaving of gender and production. For inalienable possessions, both soft and hard, evoke widespread, common symbolism associated with human reproduction and the cultural reproduction of the kin group, be it family, clan, or dynasty, accomplished primarily through keeping-while-giving.

Cultural reproduction also includes the cosmological authentication of inalienable possessions through which the presence of ancestors or gods legitimates divinity, chieftaincy, or eldership. These processes reveal how sexuality and reproduction are intimately part of social practice, played out in a range of social actions surrounding the rituals of death, marriage, birth, inheritance and the transmission of ancestral authority. Over a decade ago, Pierre Bourdieu argued, contra Lévi-Strauss, that marriage patterns did not follow formal, structural rules, but rather grew out of complex strategies, part of an “entire system of biological, cultural, and social reproduction.” Yet rarely are the cultural rituals and meanings associated with human reproduction or cosmological authentication brought into economic consideration. Although Friedrich Engels noted that biological reproduction provided the basis for the social relations of production, he never pursued this point to show how the political relations of biological reproduction have changed over time, shaping Western social and political histories. In fact, even among many feminists, the irreversible fact that women give birth has long been viewed as the proof of biology as destiny, that women's bodies de facto relegate them to homes, childcare, and domination by men. Although in Western traditions, men have organized ways to relegate biological reproduction and women to a private domain while they controlled the public institutions that legitimated primogeniture, kinship, and kingship the negative value accorded biological reproduction is by no means universal.

Anthropologists, however, in their analyses of non-Western traditions, followed similar Western priorities, segmenting rituals surrounding pregnancy and birth that connected these events to ancestors and gods into the less essential part of
dual categories—the natural, private, and profane side of social life. It was Malinowski with his Trobriand data who documented the reciprocal exchange of women between two matrilineages, but it was Lévi-Strauss who shifted the paradigm to show that women are only one among a panoply of objects exchanged between brothers-in-law. His model purports to define the invariant rules that all societies use in the organization of kin and affinal relations by showing how control over women's reproduction signals the transformation from nature to culture. Lévi-Strauss, however, argues that women occupy a special place among “objects” because, in their movement between men, they embody and conflate both nature and culture. Even though he raises women to this analytical level of objectification, Lévi-Strauss still denies women motivation and access to their own resources and strategies. Surprisingly, the structural implications of a woman as a sexual object gained strong support even among feminists. In the 1970s, with the beginning of concentrated research interest in gender, Lévi-Strauss's ideas were elaborated, for example, in Sherry Ortner's claims that women's universal subordination results not from biology per se, but from a society's cultural constructions that surround biological reproduction. In these constructions, women's roles in reproduction (i.e., nature) are ranked far lower than men's cultural accomplishments. Gayle Rubin, also following Lévi-Strauss's theory of marriage exchange, argued that the oppression of women was psychologically embedded in the way individuals are conscripted into particular systems of exchange relations that are organized by men. Ortner and Rubin attempted to challenge biological determinism by relying on structural and psychological analyses. In divergent ways, however, they both were trapped by the essentialism in Lévi-Strauss's theory of reciprocal marriage exchange that objectified women's sexuality without acknowledging how their sexuality became a source of their own strategy and manipulation through keeping rather than giving.
More recently, Marilyn Strathern's book, The Gender of the Gift, proceeds from the same assumptions about the norm of reciprocity. Strathern presumes to move beyond positivist theory by beginning with indigenous notions of personal identity and then showing the types of social relations that are their concomitants. She uses the terms “detachability” and “transformation” to discuss exchange events, but the processes she describes still are tied to a LéviStraussian model of reciprocal exchange. Therefore, objects are merely the reflections of their transactors' embeddedness in social relations, and the value of an object remains only a consequence of the identity of the exchanger. Being grounded in the a priori essentialism of the norm of reciprocity, Strathern's argument cannot account for the temporal aspects of the movements of persons and possessions and the cultural configurations that limit or expand the reproduction or dissipation of social and polit-

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ical relationships through time. All social values are existential rather than, as Strathern claims, intrinsic. Social value must be created and recreated to prevent or overcome dissipation and loss. The movements of persons and possessions through time and space are bound by, and to, the temporality of birth and death as well as production and decay, bringing into dramatic relief the problem with such dogmatic Western convictions that a woman's sexuality and her role in reproduction make her into a property that must be exchanged and controlled by men. These assumptions and fears have a long and complex history in Western political theory most dramatically spelled out by Rousseau, to whom LéviStrauss acknowledges a large debt. The novel Emile, for example, brilliantly expresses Rousseau's deep obsession with the magnitude and primordial need of men to ensure their own paternity, given the universality of the incest taboo. When Emile cruelly rejects the woman he loves because she is carrying another man's child, he proves that a woman's entire life is utterly dependent upon and driven by her ability to conceive. Therefore, sexuality and human reproduction are collapsed into a single entity that
defines a woman's primary presence in social life. It is this view that LéviStrauss scientifically objectifies in his theory of reciprocal marriage exchange, thereby conflating sexuality and human reproduction. As a consequence, he ignores the culturally reproductive domains in which social, economic, and, even in some cases, sexual intimacies between sisters and brothers are maintained even when they marry outside their own natal group.

In general, kinship studies are still defined by these cultural constructions in Western sciences as anthropologists treat sibling incest as ideological, mythical, or extraordinary. Despite LéviStrauss's elegant sociological theory of marriage exchange, the incest taboo does not simply transform biology into culture nor does marriage replace a consanguineous set of relations with a sociological set of alliances. One central problem is that beliefs in the logical priority of the norm of reciprocity define the rules of marriage exchange as an equivalence between one man's gift of his sister for the return gift of another man's sister. Another problem is that women's kinship roles are defined by collapsing the multiplicity of their reproductive exchange domains into biological reproduction despite the fact that a sister and a wife are not equivalent. A further problem emerges from excluding the multiple identities of women and men as both spouses and siblings so that even cultural reproduction is viewed analytically as an automatic, functional process. The intimate relationship between brother and sister, rather than the incest taboo, is the elementary kinship principle. First, sexuality and reproduction are culturally divisible into significant elements and foci of action and control, in which women after they marry play substantial exchange roles as sisters. Second, sibling intimacy is key to the cosmological authentication of intergenerational histories while reproducing social difference. Sibling intimacy reproduces social identities, rights to cosmological and material resources within the siblings' natal family, lineage, or clan. But since women and men typically draw on different cultural resources and
constituencies, exchange between siblings makes difference essential to these reproductive processes. Marriage, in providing additional resources to sister-brother siblings, further enhances the power of their intimacy and gives them resources from other social groups. Overall, the social and political complexities that involve local practices of sibling intimacy vary widely from one society to another. But these ethnographic diversities mask the common kinship principle of siblings who, after they marry other spouses, reproduce by exchanging with each other and/or their respective children in order to authenticate intergenerational stability while exercising and enhancing the power of difference.

The transformation of difference into rank and hierarchy is bound up with how women and men, as wives and husbands and especially as sisters and brothers, play out these multiple culturally reproductive roles. This is what kinship is all about. Proscriptive rules ignore the social and political dimensions of sibling intimacy even when its presence in Western history is significant. Robin Fox asserts that all cultures follow the one Biblical commandment, “Go forth and multiply.” Yet God's rules emanating from the Garden of Eden approved of sibling incest and marriage not only for the obvious reasons with Adam's and Eve's family, but even later, among Noah's family. Medieval nobility depended upon sibling marriages to increase their power, thereby grossly abusing the law of the Catholic church when the Pope tried to limit marriage to the seventh degree of consanguinity. But in establishing religious orders, the Catholic church itself depended upon the value of sibling incest by having women enter into “spiritual marriage” with their “brothers”—the residents of monasteries close by. Since many siblings from wealthy families entered these communities, often sisters were “married” to their own blood brothers. In other parts of the world, Polynesian chiefs and kings did not command allegiance and submission without the cosmological powers of their sisters. In many cases, these women themselves became well-known chiefs and queens. Brother-sister incest existed as a portentous political option either as
an actual genealogically correct marriage or as the prerogative of the first sister and brother clan ancestors. Sister-brother incest is at once sacred and profane, politically dynamic and rigorously disguised, the ultimate solution to legitimacy and the most feared compromise. Reductionist rules of its prohibition linked as they are to the rules of reciprocity can never expose the vast reproductive power in sibling intimacy even in societies where sibling incest is rigorously taboo. The sibling taboo is bound up with the same paradoxical dynamics and motivations that haunt and shape the problem of keeping-while-giving.

**Reconfiguring Exchange Theory**

This book is an anthropological experiment—a new way to conceptualize exchange processes and values which accommodates the place of gender in social theory and leads to a reconceptualization of how difference is transformed into rank and hierarchy. I call these chapters experiments because they represent an alternative mode of ethnographic description and explanation. This mode is based on the paradoxical nature of social life, focusing on the ambiguities and heterogeneities in exchange rather than upon normative and homogeneous characteristics. My experiment is to reexamine classic anthropological exchange theories and the ethnographies that validated these theories to demystify the ahistorical essentialism in the norm of reciprocity which has masked the political dynamics and gender-based power constituted through keeping-while-giving.

In the first chapter, I trace the problems I inherited in my own Trobriand fieldwork from Malinowski's projection of the norm of reciprocity as the underlying principle in all “primitive” social relations. I show how the norm of reciprocity developed as a Western cultural construction and how its use was transformed to fit different Western and “primitive” economic situations, whereas the most ancient and powerful economic classification, inalienable and alienable possessions, was ignored. This historical discussion sets the stage for chapter 2, where I take Marcel Mauss's *The Gift*
and reanalyze the most controversial theoretical text on “primitive” exchange and the Maori ethnography that provided Mauss with the answer to the problem of why a gift given elicits a return. Although Lévi-Strauss believes that Mauss's ethnographic entanglement in the Maori point of view limited his ability to develop a structural model of exchange, it is precisely the dense Maori ethnographic descriptions that reveal the priority that the Maori themselves accord inalienable possessions. Women's production of cloth, some of which becomes inalienable because it is imbued with mana, the procreative power that women acquire, is central to these priorities. The guardianship of inalienable possessions such as these transforms difference into rank.

With this reinterpretation of Maori exchange and gender in mind, in chapter 3 I first examine the elementary principles in Lévi-Strauss's theory of marriage exchange to show that although actual sibling incest may be culturally disavowed it remains intransigent and politically vital. Turning to Polynesia, where questions regarding political hierarchy have long been argued, I take up these issues by reanalyzing ethnographic data from three societies, Samoa, ancient Hawaii, and the Trobriands, which differ politically in terms of rank and hierarchy. My selection is ethnographically arbitrary, based solely on my having done fieldwork in the Trobriands and Western Samoa; I then draw on the Hawaiian material because it represents the most elaborated Polynesian political hierarchy. In each case, whether sibling incest is overtly practiced, disguised, or latent, the reproductive power in brother-sister intimacy gives women as sisters an impressive domain of authority and power. The variation in the political extent of that domain among these three societies correlates with the way inalienable possessions are used to substantiate difference through the authentication of sacred origins and genealogies.

My aims in chapter 4 are twofold: first, to reexamine exchange in a range of
societies without the formal establishment of ranking and hierarchy, from foraging
groups to egalitarian and bigman societies, and to show how ownership of inalienable
possessions still generates difference that establishes a degree of political autonomy for
women and men. Second, to draw on data from diverse societies where descent is
reckoned patrilineally to show how, even in these cases, men's and women's autonomy is
dependent upon the bonds of brother-sister intimacy. Keeping to the general Pacific area,
I take my examples from several Australian Aboriginal groups and from the Bimin-
Kuskusmin and Melpa peoples of Papua New Guinea. My comparisons show how the
development of hierarchy is limited by the authentication and circumscription of
inalienable possessions as well as by the way the roles of men as brothers conflict with
their roles as spouses. These comparisons continue into chapter 5 where I take up the
most historically celebrated ethnographic example of exchange: the kula, an
interisland network of partners living on other Massim Islands with whom Trobriand
Islanders exchange elaborately decorated armshells for necklaces. Although in
one way the return to the Trobriands recycles back to the incipient nature of Trobriand
hierarchy in relation to the Polynesian examples discussed in chapter 3, the Trobriands
also represent the most complex ranking system in relation to the more egalitarian
examples in chapter 4. What we find is that in the other kula areas of the Massim, kula
activity provides a context for chiefly authority where actual ranking and chiefs do not
exist. In these situations, ranking is sustained briefly yet ultimately defeated because the
shells are inalienable only for a limited time. But within that time period, exchange is
subverted, keeping is paramount and difference is politically flaunted. In the Trobriands,
where difference is transformed into rank, brother-sister intimacy, materially expressed
through exchanges of women's cloth wealth, provides the economic and cosmological
resources that matter.

In chapter 6, I summarize my arguments to show the cultural effort it takes to
reconfigure the loss of sisters, the loss of inalienable possessions, and the loss of cosmological authentication not just because of death or decay but because of their value to other groups. Local solutions remain disjunctive and incomplete, skewing gender relations in various ways that, in some cases, give women political power and possibilities. In other situations, women may have status in some domains while they are subordinated in others. Where subordination does occur, as wives, for example, women's willingness to be dominated may be because as sisters they achieve a level of authority that ultimately is important for their own children. A simple set of essentialist norms or classifications cannot encompass these multiple possibilities. The very terms reciprocity, reproduction, and incest have long complicated Western histories that deny their cultural neutrality and reflect Western assumptions about authority, power, and the political domain. By showing that keeping-while-giving is fundamental to the establishment of difference, I also show how power is lodged at the center of how women and men produce, guard, and authenticate inalienable possessions. For even when the possession itself is not present in an exchange, the fact of its ownership and the potential of its irrevocable loss confirms the presence of difference between one person or group and others. Out of this difference negotiated in exchange over what is not exchanged, power is generated and, under certain circumstances in which women are vital, transforms difference into hierarchy.
Historicity, Achronicity, and the Materiality of Cultures in Colonial Brazil

Amy J. Buono

Abstract

Much of the visual and material culture of colonial Brazil has been omitted from scholarly accounts because it falls outside the familiar repertoire of art historical forms and materials, and also defies categorization by cultural origin and period style. Turning especially to Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann’s notion of histoire croisée (intercrossed history), this article examines the methodological implications of incorporating such uncomfortable art objects into scholarly accounts by attending to three disparate kinds of artifacts especially characteristic of colonial Brazil: Tupinambá featherwork, Portuguese Atlantic mandinga bags, and architectural tilework. Each of these exemplifies the complex, transcultural processes that take place within colonial contexts, transgressing cultural, religious, and linguistic boundaries, and moving across continents, oceans, and centuries.

Art Historical Frames

Disciplinarily, art historians gravitate toward a normative range of artifacts — architecture, sculpture, painting, and decorative arts — that fall within the confines of traditional “fine arts” categories and for which there are established analytical methodologies. Similarly, the historical and institutional development of the discipline has encouraged scholars to focus upon schools of art defined by political and linguistic territorial boundaries and by (equally normative) stylistic periods. These disciplinary tendencies frequently inflect histories of colonial art, resulting in the valorizing of artworks that fit comfortably within these cultural and temporal precincts and the marginalizing of other sorts of artifacts that do not.

Art of colonial Brazil, for example, is most often represented by the architecture and sculpture of Antônio Francisco Lisboa (Aleijadinho, 1730/38–1814), such as this facade from the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Ouro Preto in the state of Minas Gerais (fig. 1).² Aleijadinho’s church facades and sculptures in wood and soapstone are routinely illustrated in art historical surveys of Brazilian colonial art. They serve as well-known examples of the splendors of the colonial mining towns, in no small part thanks to Brazilian modernists’ attention to Baroque art and their valorization of an Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage.² However, the complex interactions among the many participants in colonial Brazil’s interculture, which included
diverse indigenous peoples, many European and African cultures, and numerous artistic and religious cultures, generated a vastly more varied corpus of artworks than that exemplified by the Baroque sculpture and churches of Minas Gerais. What would it mean to construct a history of colonial Brazilian art that takes seriously the full range of material culture from the entire colonial period?

Fig. 1. **O Aleijadinho** [Antônio Francisco Lisboa] (Brazilian, 1730/38–1814). Facade of the Chapel of the Third Order of Saint Francis of Assisi, Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Brazil, built ca. 1766. Photo: With kind permission of Kirk L. Peterson, MD

In the Brazilian context, one encounters a body of art that is disciplinarily uncomfortable, that is nonnormative in terms of materials, forms, and functions. These artworks cannot easily be interpreted within standard formal, stylistic, or social terms. As colonial objects they are not inextricably transcultural nor strictly indigenous, European, African, or Asian, and they incorporate elements of multiple belief systems. Furthermore, the historian must remember that many of these objects remain potent for living Brazilian cultures. In this way, they belong to what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the “ontological now,” which stresses the continuous relationship between past and present practices—between modernity and everything before. By using the term *achronicity* in the title of this essay, I refer to the fact that such living objects cannot easily be contained within a traditional historical chronology. If approached as potent and spiritual, many Brazilian artworks must be seen as ontologically self-sufficient and not only as historically contingent artifacts.

In this essay, I use three nontraditional forms from the visual culture of colonial Brazil—Tupinambá featherwork, Portuguese Atlantic *mandinga* pouches, and *azulejos* (tilework)—in order to meditate upon materiality and temporality as methodological problems with which our discipline should engage. Each of these art forms has historical trajectories that span cultures, continents, and centuries, a circumstance that raises questions as to how such diverse and stubbornly nonhistoricizable genres can be melded into a coherent historical narrative of the visual and material cultures specific to “Brazil,” especially when two of them—the *mandinga* bags and *azulejos*—are not intrinsically Brazilian.

This issue raises what is still an unresolved question for art history: what do we understand “Brazil” to be, before the modern nation-state and its attendant art movements? Brazil has always stood at the margins of historical debates about the concept of “Latin America,” largely because of its notable differences from Spanish America in language, culture, and political institutions. One of the most significant distinctions between Portuguese America and both the Iberian homeland and colonial Spanish America was the absence of workshops and a guild system for the regulation of crafts. Nonetheless, colonial Brazil produced a vibrant material culture, which scholars must account for in writing our histories.

Our scholarly and theoretical apparatus is integral to these histories, an issue that has been discussed in relation to colonial Latin American visual culture and its postcolonial framework by Carolyn Dean, Dana Leibsohn, and Barbara E. Mundy. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann’s idea of *histoire croisée* (intercrossed history) offers a compelling model for thinking about and attending to a multiplicity of discourses and perspectives, including those of the scholars themselves, and to the processes by which
these interact. Art historians wishing to explore such a framework thus must regard their methodologies as consubstantial with their objects of study, as well as attend to diachronic processes of transfer and transformation. I find this notion of “consubstantiality” of some consequence for art historians, bound as we are to the materiality of our objects.

Tupinambá Featherwork

Featherwork of the Tupinambá of early modern coastal Brazil, perhaps more than any other art form, has been emblematic of Brazil since European contact. As a geographic designation, the name “Brazil” was given to the territory in the sixteenth century as a descriptor for “the country where brazilwood grows,” after which it was adapted into the generic referent for the coastal Tupi and other native inhabitants. Since the nineteenth century, scholars have regarded their feathered vestments as ethnological remnants of pre-contact Brazilian cultures. However, all extant Tupinambá featherwork was made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries within the ambit of Jesuit missions and colonial markets, and thus is a product of a colonial Brazilian interculture. As distinguished from the indigenous cultures of Mesoamerica and the Andes, the seminomadic Tupi had no large-scale, permanent architecture and no written language. The larger discipline’s preference for urban cultures, architecture, painting, and sculpture has predisposed it, when directed toward the Americas, to the study of imperialistic artistic traditions and the neglect of less-monumental cultures. In the early modern period, however, Tupi feathered capes and crowns were among the most familiar New World artifacts; they were so crucial to the conceptualization of the Americas in early modern European scientific and religious contexts that the historian William Sturtevant referred to the development as the “Tupinambization” of the Atlantic world. These objects also remain crucial touchstones of Brazilian national and indigenous identity today.

Tupi featherworkers employed sophisticated techniques for mimicking the appearance of birds at particular stages of life, as in a down bonnet that captures the soft, fluffy appearance of a newborn bird (fig. 2). Fitted closely to the head like a skullcap and produced from parrot down, the bonnet’s appearance has the look of a just-born fowl, as very young birds lack the firm contour feathers. In contrast, elaborately crafted full-body Tupi capes captured the sleek, structured profile of an adult scarlet ibis. In the creation of the bonnet, a distinct aesthetic choice was made in deciding to use down feathers over the more easily acquired exterior plumes, the result of which is an extraordinarily delicate textural effect that mimics the form of baby chicks. The binding technique shows how, in the case of the bonnet, the artist achieved this effect: pieces of down were bound to small sticks, which were attached perpendicularly to the webbed matrix below. Just as the Tupi bonnet helped to transfigure its wearer into a spiritual aspect of a newborn bird, other featherwork vestments were in all likelihood similarly transformative. Feathers, in fact, were signs of divinity: they were rare, elite, prestigious materials accessed by those in power, material that in funerary contexts assisted the deceased in their journeys to other dimensions, and that acted as adornments in sacrificial rites and postbattle rituals.
In the absence of Tupi written sources, how can scholars confirm these imitative dimensions of their featherwork? Some anthropologists use living Amazonian featherworking cultures as evidence of historical practices in the region. For example, Bororo infants in Matto Grosso are coated in a sticky substance and covered in toucan down with a textural effect comparable to that of the down bonnet. Though this garment is part of a rebirthing ritual that takes place in the contemporary world—thus distant in not only time but also cultural and geographic space from sixteenth-century Amerindian Brazil—it does echo ceremonial and material practices of featherwork discussed in sixteenth-century ethnohistorical documents. In my own work as an art historian, I combine disciplinary-based technical material analysis with historical epistemology, and a comparative anthropological approach when appropriate, in order to understand the functions of Tupi artistic practices and their cultural significance.

Tupi featherwork survives only in European museums as fragments of early modern collections that crossed the Atlantic through the agency of missionaries, merchants, and naturalists. Once in Europe, Tupi featherwork had an afterlife of ritual usage in courtly processions, funerals, and spectacles that helped endow the objects with sufficient value in the European context. To contend with these objects art historically therefore demands that they be contextualized within their diverse sites of social and cultural practice: both Brazil and Europe. They were produced in colonial Brazil, used in Jesuit-Tupi religious and secular contexts along the South American coasts, and then redeployed in pedagogical, ritual, and diplomatic contexts in early modern European universities and cities. Additionally, they serve today as signs of indigenous agency for the Tupinambá of Olivença in Bahia, who perceive these objects as links to their ancestral lineage that promote political legitimacy with the Brazilian government. Tupi featherwork thus sits at an intercrossed history, demanding a richer frame of analysis than can be deployed by seeing its objects as only historically bound traces of a lost, autochthonous heritage and as curious remains of the Kunst- und Wunderkammern.

Mandingas

From the ethnic Mandinga from the Guinea and Mina coasts came mandinga pouches (bolsas de mandingas in Portuguese), fabric or leather containers that originally held kabbalistic signs and numbers, as well as passages from the Qur’an. As James Sweet has discussed, in the early modern period, bolsas entered into circulation in both Islamic and Christian contexts—in West Africa, Brazil, and Southern Europe—filled with a remarkable range of efficacious natural and human-crafted artifacts from both sides of the Atlantic. Bolsas de mandingas often held diagrammatic drawings of Christian symbols like the Sacred Heart, as well as “orations,” Christian texts written on folded pieces of paper (fig. 3). One such oration was produced around 1700 in Brazil and brought to Lisbon by a former slave from Rio de Janeiro.
This drawing would have originally been held in a small pouch. Very few of these bolsas survive today outside of the Inquisition records of colonial archives. A few pictorial vestiges have also been preserved, including a remarkable watercolor image of an Afro-Brazilian woman from the mid-eighteenth century by the Italian engineer Carlos Julião (1740–1811), who produced it while he was stationed in Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais (fig. 4).

Fig. 3. Mandinga “oration,” before 1731, drawing. Lisbon, Portugal, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Inquisition file of José Francisco Pedroso, native of Mina, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 1174


Bolsas de mandingas functioned like portable relics, bringing wealth, success, and power to their wearers. Seen as a form of sorcery, or feitiçaria, they were outlawed by the Portuguese Inquisition throughout the Portuguese Empire, even as they became a cultural commodity used by men and women of African descent, both free and enslaved, and also by white Portuguese men. They were worn by Africans and those of African descent on both sides of the Atlantic as a protection against enslavement and physical harm, while they were used by white Portuguese men for purposes of birth control and good fortune in gambling. Significantly, although an integral part of Brazil’s material and cultural history, mandinga
pouches transcend national, ethnic, and religious categories. These culturally intercrossed objects reveal that the “Brazilian-ness” of art and material history is at least as much a matter of where social practices occur as it is of where objects are invented or made. In turn, this has implications for our approach of Tupi featherwork; given that it was actively utilized in European rituals and political performances, the spaces of Brazil’s colonial interculture must also be understood to encompass Europe itself.

While art historians have largely ignored the mandinga pouches, in which the more “artistic” elements are hidden from view inside the pouch itself, the functionally related but more ostentatious cast silver and gold pencas de balangandãs—beautifully wrought chains of amulets—have frequently appeared in art exhibitions. As we can see in the Marc Ferrez (1843–1923) photograph of an Afro-Brazilian woman adorned with jewelry (fig. 5), pencas, like bolsas de mandingas, were prominently displayed around the waist, and they served very similar apotropaic functions. Individual amulets took the shape of animals, fruits, Christian and African sacred figures, and whimsical tokens of everyday life. Crafted by the same religious workshops that produced silver monstrances and reliquaries that ornament Brazil’s Baroque churches and twenty-first-century museums, many of these amulets—especially those in the form of body parts—functioned like miniaturized ex-votos. The difference in the discipline’s treatment of the bolsas and the pencas can largely be attributed to the objects’ materiality (the former are made of less-valuable fabric or leather whereas the latter are beautifully crafted precious metals) rather than any inherent difference in their sociocultural significance.

Fig. 5. **Marc Ferrez** (Brazilian, 1843–1923). Portrait of an Afro-Brazilian woman with elaborate jewelry, and pencas de balangandãs around her waist, ca. 1885, photograph, dimensions unknown. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Acervo do Instituto Moreira Salles

**Azulejos**

Decorative tiles—azulejos—were ubiquitous throughout early modern Brazil and Portugal. Simultaneously a type of earthenware, a form of mural, and a medium of painting, azulejos are the interior and exterior “skins” of buildings, forming a dominant visual element in the lived experience of urban existence in the region. However, despite their visual prominence, azulejos pose disciplinary challenges since tiles collapse some of the subdisciplinary precincts within art history, challenging the distinctions between “major” and “minor” art forms and epitomizing the concept of intercrossed history discussed in this essay.

The term azulejo is derived from the Arabic word az-zulayi, meaning “polished stone.” Spain’s medieval Islamic inhabitants introduced decorative tiles for facing walls and paving floors, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Portugal imported tiles from Spain for use in religious and private buildings. By the seventeenth century, blue and white tiles from the Netherlands, themselves a stylistic response to Ming dynasty porcelain, became a standard component in Iberian building practices. The Portuguese in turn...
exported azulejos in the seventeenth century to the Azores, Madeira, and Brazil. In Portugal and Brazil, no other art form played such a complex role in transforming urban spaces. All tilework was imported, as there was no craft industry in early modern Brazil, and therefore no azulejo workshops. This is the reverse of what happened with featherwork, which was produced in Tupi-Jesuit aldeias (missions) and exported to Europe. Commercially, Portugal profitably imported natural resources such as brazilwood and sugar from Brazil and then, also profitably, exported material like azulejos for remaking the urban fabric in its “own” image.

Tiles arrived in Brazil not as carefully handled trade goods but as ballast in ships. They were used to face buildings, providing a durable form of decoration in a hot and humid climate. One of the most significant examples is housed within the cloister of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Salvador de Bahia, which employed nearly 35,000 imported European azulejos to enliven its interior spaces. As Thijs Weststeijn details, the cloister’s tilework dates from circa 1746–50 and is based upon the Flemish artist Otto van Veen’s Emblemata Horatiana, correlating thematically to the functional spaces lying behind and beyond the walls of the cloister (fig. 6). Unlike the frescoes and tiles of many colonial cloisters throughout Latin America, the pictorial program of this Salvador cloister was allegorical rather than explicitly religious, drawing upon an emblematic literature that, like the blue and white style of the tiles themselves, was imported into the Iberophone world from the Low Countries. On the ground floor alone, there are thirty-seven tile-paneled scenes featuring ancient gods, soldiers, and other emblematic iconography borrowed from van Veen. The azulejo cloister is thus not only transcultural but also transmedial, speaking to the way that images move across time, space, and artistic form.

Fig. 6. Tilework cloister of the Convent of the Third Order of Saint Francis of Assisi, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 1708–52, imported European tiles. Photo: With kind permission Kirk L. Peterson, MD

The cloister’s tilework exemplifies the complexities of visual and material culture found in intercrossed colonial contexts. The cloister’s tiles may have been manufactured in either Portuguese or Dutch workshops, but it is clear they were not made in Brazil, since no ceramic or tile workshops had been established there. The style of the blue and white tile is itself a Dutch reworking in earthenware of a Chinese form of porcelain and deployed on a building material that traces its origins to medieval Islamic architecture. As for the subject matter, the meditative environment the azulejos created for the Franciscan friars pictorially derives from a Flemish artist’s visualizations of an ancient Roman philosopher’s writings. None of this obviated the centrality of azulejos to the artistic fabric of Brazil in the colonial period and beyond.

So ubiquitous has tilework become in the Brazilian environment, and in Brazilian modernity, that it has been appropriated by artists including Athos Bulcão (1918–2008) and Cândido Portinari (1903–62), as well as the landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (1909–94), all of whom collaborated with Oscar Niemeyer.
(1907–2012) in designing elements of the modernist capital of Brasilia. One only need look toward the large-scale exhibitions of the Brazilian contemporary artist Adriana Varejão or to the installations at the Inhotim museum in Minas Gerais for evidence of the potency of this media form within Brazilian visual and institutional culture today.

In this sense, azulejos have become as ubiquitous and even ostentatious a signifier of Brazil in the later colonial period and modern eras as Tupi featherwork had been in the early modern period. In very loose terms, both served as “skins,” one transforming the Tupi or European body within a ritual context and the other transfiguring a building into a pictorial palimpsest. Because Tupi featherwork was fabricated by indigenous artisans within the territorial precincts of what is now the modern nation, for a wide variety of stakeholders it has appeared to possess an ontological claim to an innate “Brazilian-ness” that early modern azulejos lack. The fact that the surviving featherwork was produced within colonial missions, however, complicates the basis of this judgment. Unlike tiles and featherwork, bolsas de mandingas are outwardly drab, concealing within themselves elaborate diagrams and an assorted collection of apotropaic artifacts. The point of origin of azulejos, like that of mandinga bags, lies outside territorial Brazil, and they serve equally well as indices of the diverse nonindigenous ethnic, cultural, and religious strands that are woven into Brazil’s colonial culture.

Featherwork, mandinga pouches, and azulejos are only a few of the colonial Brazilian art forms in which multiple cultures, temporalities, and epistemologies are intercrossed. None of these fits comfortably within traditional historical periods, stylistic/formal categories, or nationally determined art historical narratives. They do, however, reveal much about the complexities of how Brazil’s rich cultural and material heritage was formed—a picture that is not as readily visible when restricting our studies to disciplinarily normative objects. These art forms offer a similarly rich portrait of the entanglement of Brazil’s heterogenous visual and material cultures, an understanding of which can contribute much to our knowledge of the colonial period, and of the role of materiality in shaping cultural, political, and social lives.

Parable

Constructing a history of colonial Brazilian art and material culture is, in both the usual and the Foucauldian senses of the word, a disciplinary undertaking. Rio de Janeiro’s Civil Police Museum may serve as a parable for understanding how the material culture of Brazil intersects with institutional power and disciplinary practice. Founded in 1912, in the former police headquarters, the museum first functioned as an instructional facility for police academy students, and at some point, likely in the 1930s, it opened to the public at large (fig. 7). This museum served several functions from the outset: it celebrated the history of the police as an institution and it was used to instruct future police officers about procedures and crime in the city. The museum also sought to teach and display aspects of crime to Rio’s citizenry by featuring criminal objects (weapons, poisons, gambling materials, drug paraphernalia, astrology charts), criminal behavior (detective novels, re-creations of crime scenes), and technologies of crime (fingerprinting machines, cameras, phrenological materials), as well as charting histories of the relationships between the police academy and the government (through objects such as uniforms, insignias, paraphernalia, and money). One particularly interesting selection of objects is found in the legal medical collection of the museum, where rooms contain wax sculptures of wounds, lacerations, and other visible traumas to the body that a police officer might encounter on a crime scene (fig. 8).
By the 1920s, the museum also served as a place of incarceration for spiritually dynamic objects of Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda. These were confiscated from Candomblé terreiros, or temples, which police suspected of harboring communist sympathizers, and other “disruptive” elements. As noted by sociologist Alexandre Fernandes Corrêa, the police were instructed to place anything “sinister, strange, primitive, [or] grotesque,” or that had “immaterial and intangible ritual dimensions,” into a special space in the museum called the Coleção Museu de Magia Negra (Museum Collection of Black Magic). Officers who were assigned to this post became reluctant ethnographers and historians through the research they conducted about the artifacts and how they were used. They also disciplined these objects in two ways: by attempting to contain and restrict their power, and by subjecting them to ethnographic and cultural study, inadvertently, as it were, turning them into objects of scholarly scrutiny. Paradoxically, though, the very act of incarcerating these objects had the effect of officially confirming and at some level perpetuating the real presence of their magical powers. In Werner and Zimmermann’s terms, the museum is the embodiment of “intercrossed histories.”

In 1938, under the aegis of Mario de Andrade, the Collection of Black Magic was declared Brazil’s first ethnographic collection registered as national patrimony. This action was symptomatic of the Vargas regime, which alternately suppressed and promoted Afro-Brazilian religious practices depending on the political exigencies of the moment. This the collection of Afro-Brazilian objects was inserted into the museum’s canonical, documentary history of the civil police, existing alongside portraits of past officials, collections of antiquated truncheons and handcuffs, and period rooms, such as that of the old police commissioner. This is precisely what makes the museum such a fascinating and unsettling experience; its political and cultural multidimensionality can be richly mined by art historians, museologists, anthropologists, and political historians alike.
Art historians and other scholars of colonial Brazil—at times reluctantly, like Rio’s civil police officers assigned to the museum—convert feathered capes, maninga pouches, pictorial tilework, and many other objects into scholarly artifacts. This act has real-world effects, just as seizing and studying Candomblé materials did; it perhaps encourages their preservation, affects their market values, or shifts the balance from thinking of them as living, potent entities or as part of the mundane realities of urban life, or even as essential elements of national heritage. This process is a continuation of the already rich, intercrossed lives of these objects. Attending to their prior histories, and to the nature of our own contributions, will help ensure that the full complexity of Brazil’s past and present is more fully understood.

Notes

- **Amy Buono** is a visiting professor and researcher at the Instituto de Artes at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, specializing in the art and material culture of colonial Brazil.

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- **1** Myriam Andrade Ribeiro de Oliveira, *O Aleijadinho e sua oficina* (São Paulo: Editora Capivara, 2002).
- **4** In fact, much the same can be said about many kinds of art objects, including (but certainly not limited to) Old Master European religious art, which for many viewers retains its religious potency. With very rare exceptions, however, art historians tend to overlook this sort of achronicity when discussing canonical art objects.
- **8** Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison: *Histoire croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *Religion and History* 45 (2006): 30–50. I have opted to translate *histoire croisée* as “intercrossed history” for the purposes of this article, but for the difficulties of translating the term, see Jani Marjanen, “Undermining Methodological Nationalism: *Histoire croisée* of Concepts as Transnational History,” in Mathias Albert et al., eds., *Transnational Political Spaces: Agents, Structures, Encounters* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag GmbH), 244.
10 “Brazil” was originally a Celtic word for the mineral called “breazail” (meaning red). See the first chapter of Eduardo Bueno and Ana Roquero, Pau-Brasil (São Paulo: Axis Mundi, 2002), 29.
15 Alfred Métraux, La civilisation matérielle des tribus tupí-guaraní [The material culture of the Tupi-Guarani tribes], (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928).
20 This case is detailed and illustrated in Daniela Bueno Calainho, Metrópole das Mandingas: Religiosidade negra e Inquisição portuguesa no Antigo Regime (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008).
25 Cunha and Milz, Joias de Crioula.
26 I. M. Santos Simões, Azulejaria portuguesa no Brasil (1580–1822) (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1965), is one of the foundational works. For more recent examinations, see Thijs Weststeijn, “Otto Vaenius’ Emblemata Horatiana and the Azulejos in the Monastery of São Francisco in Salvador De Bahia,” De zeventiende eeuw 21 (2005): 128–45; Maria Alexandra Trinidad Gago da Câmara, “Portuguese Baroque Art in Colonial Brazil: The Heritage of 18th-


29 For a recent discussion of archival sources and possible workshops, see Borges, “Questões em torno de autorias.”


32 Alexandre Fernandes Corrêa, O Museu Mefistofélico e a distabulação da magia: Análise do tombamento do primeiro patrimônio etnográfico do Brasil (São Luis, Brazil: EDUFMA, 2009).


35 Corrêa, O Museu Mefistofélico, 409.

36 This collection was registered with Brazil’s then-newly formed SPHAN (Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, 1937–46), the governmental organ for cultural patrimony. Corrêa, O Museu Mefistofélico, 406.


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Tupi Featherwork and the Dynamics of Intercultural Exchange in Early Modern Brazil

Amy Buono, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

Introduction

The Tupi of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century eastern Brazil were renowned as fiercely warrior-like and, more sentimentally, as cannibals. They were also famed for their ritual featherwork capes made from scarlet ibis feathers, which were closely associated with both war and anthropophagous rituals (see figure). For the semi-nomadic Tupi, featherwork was highly valued, the capes being among the only things that they carefully preserved and passed on to their sons as they moved from site to site. All eleven surviving plumed capes—with one possible exception—were produced between the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil in 1500 and the Dutch departure from Brazil in 1654. These are, therefore, pre-Columbian artefacts; the colonial context is their original context. Today, all surviving Tupi feathered artefacts reside in Europe, the museums of early modern collections. Indigenous American feathered clothing was much desired by European collectors, and the artefacts were produced and distributed through and by missionaries, aristocrats, princes, humboldtian and doctors.

What circumstances were these cloaks produced and exchanged? What functions did they serve within their various colonial contexts? These questions can be answered only through colonial sources, such as missionary letters, inventories and written records, which are certainly coloured by the biases of their European authors or artists, but also contain valuable information concerning the technical production and functions of Tupi featherwork in colonial Brazil.

The Tupi were a semi-nomadic society inhabiting Brazil’s coastal forests. Tupi culture was largely oral, centring on ceremonial traditions that involved dance, sound, movement and adornment. Stories and images of everyday life among the Tupi, their febrile warfare society and their elaborate rituals associated with cannibalism and the imagination of Renaissance Europe.

Imagery of the Tupi, their rituals, and their capes provided the seeds for centuries of vividly tenacious stereotypes concerning New World cultures, and created a great demand for their artefacts within the European marketplace. The Tupi were members of a colonial interculture: a new culture created through the intercession of many different early modern participants the Tupi, non-Tupi Indigenous groups, Europeans of various nationalities and African slaves.

According to sixteenth-century chroniclers, the feathered mantles served many ritual purposes: as symbols to the ancestral realm during funerary rites, as signs of power or prestige during assemblies, as markers of status during captive-raptor rites. As I will discuss below, within the context of the Jesuit mission, the capes were incorporated into the performance of Christian sacraments as well.

All known Tupi capes are made from the feathers of the guará, or scarlet ibis (Eudocimus ruber), a wading bird of the tropical Atlantic coast.
These medium to large wading birds resemble short and intensely coloured tanager. European source detail how the scarlet ibis was a used for emblems of all kinds. Europeans viewed the Tupi relationship to birds as highly complex. The Tupi connected many bird songs, including that of the guano, to spirits of birds. One French missionary—Jean de Léry (1536-1603)—describes for example, a short bird noted by the Tupi who held in their highest regard because it was a communicator with the supernatural realm. He further postulates on the greater significance of avian life to the Tupi.

But the mystery that I want to mention is this bird's voice, it's so penetrating—even more pitiful than that of a scared owl—that our poor Tupi would, being hard to them, cry more often to the night than the daytime, have the sound of it. In the way of theꞌtũka, it is accompanied in their lives by their deceased relatives and friends. And they're sending these birds as a sign of good luck, and especially to encourage them to bear themselves valiantly in their fight against their enemies. They believe that if they observe the bird, they will be led to them. So it is that the Tupi have come to establish that the bird is a sign of power, not only will they vanquish their enemies, but the Tupi's own survival will not fall to ruin in the context.

Léry's account strongly hints that the weeping of feathers garments and bodily adornments may have been a way of dialectically identifying with the appearance or behaviour of certain birds for spiritual ends.

The contrast in texture between the Tupi feathered bonnet and a full-length cape both in Copenhagen provides some insight into how the very techniques used by Tupi plumbers may have contributed to the ritualized identities. The yellow bonnet is made by binding several pieces of dows to a wooden core, which is then attached to the bird's head, thereby compelling the feathered appearance of a bird of the color. In contrast, only native feathers are used and are attached directly to the wearer, mimicking the body's natural appearance.

Colonial documents confirm that the Tupi practiced sacrifice. Among the earliest known accounts in Brazil is one written in 1576 by a Portuguese humanist and traveller named Glândavo, in his Historia de Brazil. He reports that:

The Indians of the land are accustomed to pluck the feathers of a certain bird while young, and then to dye the bird with the blood of a certain race to which they add certain other ingredients. The color of the feathers grows out once more they are exactly the color of the real feathers [of another species].

Glândavo goes on to note that the Indians dye the feathers of a certain bird while young, and then to dye the bird with the blood of a certain race to which they add certain other ingredients. The color of the feathers grows out once more they are exactly the color of the real feathers [of another species].

Europeans perceived Tupi featherwork as the ultimate expression of Tupi culture, as evidenced by the abundance of Turner's lauds and commentary on their work in the African marketplace.

Jesus Accommodation in Brazil

The Tupi were not merely marketing craft items to feed their families; they were rubbing themselves against their ritual objects from their past in order to embark on a new Christian life in Tupi territory.

All of this is significant because it shows light on the nature of the way in which the Tupi were integrating their spiritual practices with their Christian space.

In 1537, Glândavo wrote to Ignatius of Loyola with an extraordinary eyewitness account of a Tupi ceremony that preceded the ritual execution of a captive enemy.

Six male warriors were taken by the public square, singing in their customary way, and making such gestures and shaking movements that they really did seem like demons. From head to foot they were dressed with red feathers. On their heads they wore caps, and when the feathers were dyed green (examination of yellow feathers). On their backs they wore an array of feathers that appeared like a horse's mane, and to adorn the celebration they placed flowers made from the blossoms of their clan.

With this attire, they were walking around barking like dogs and feasting with such violence that I have no idea of what they were doing. All of this seems to me just as they were doing. It seems that they are just as they are.

These Tupi adorned themselves with feathers, which is a clear sign of the Holy Spirit having touched their hearts. Because the feathers that they have are the finest ornaments that exist, and they used them to adorn their own bodies and other clothing they wore. This work of art has drawn much attention from all the Tupi, for they have so admired the beauty and grace of these feathers.
The vestments of the 'demonic' women appear to have been Tupi feathered ibis cloaks. Moreover, the yellow 'Inquisition' capes that Bilancourt describes correspond to the one surviving yellow down brooch in Lisbon. This letter provides documentary evidence that Tupi featherwork was in use in the earliest period of the Jesuit presence in Brazil. Again an analogy is made between Tupi ritual featherwork—the yellow headdress—and European ritual vestments—the 'Inquisition' capes. Bilancourt's use of the word 'imitate' to describe the sounds emanating from the woman's mouth recalls Glândavo's comments about echolocation, that 'the Indians deceive people by selling (the altered feathers) for the true species', Glândavo asserts that smoking was used intentionally for illicit financial gains by hawkers counterfeiters, selling false exotic and fleecing the tourists in the market, a site of social and material exchange that had been introduced by the colonizing Europeans themselves.

Analogously, the objects produced with colour-modified feathers became emblematic of the tensions in the marketplace of colonial Brazil. What was the framework available to Glândavo for understanding the intentions behind apitau? What is the maker of his existing this as a question of marketing counterfeit materials, of making a profit by passing off cheap goods for expensive ones? Two possibilities present themselves here. The Tupi may have modified the feather as a means of enhancing its symbolic or ritual value, meaning that Glândavo profusely ignored Tupi intentionality. The possibility remains, however, that Tupi featherworkers did indeed substitute inferior plumes, perhaps chicken feathers, for those of birds more covered by European purchasers, thus asserting their agency within the colonial framework by manipulating the market for financial profit. Maybe Glândavo got right.

Tupi featherwork, in fact, Jay between cultures and assimilating the Tupi and their material culture for Europeans, both in the adelida missions and in the marketplace. The Jesuits were central to the process of mediating and transforming the Tupi and their material culture for Europeans, both in the adelida missions and in the marketplace. The Jesuits were instrumental in shipping Tupi featherwork itself. In the same letter that mentions trading Agua Dasi waters for feathers, Montecore specifies that he shipped feathered mantles from Parintamboco to the Vatican. "Your Highness, a few days ago I sent across the sea to you a box of feathered capes."

This is our only known source that explicitly mentions the shipment of Tupi feathered capes, establishing that the Jesuits were directly involved in transporting Tupi materials to Europe, and must have been a source of Brazilian materials for European collectors.

Conclusion

Tupi feathered capes assumed multiple roles in varied cultural contexts, embodying different types of knowledge for their makers and their viewers. As mediated by colonial accounts, the Tupi appear to have valued the capes as essential components in highly charged religious and ceremonial anniversaries and as precious commodities. Missionsaries and merchants carried Tupi capes back to Europe as material evidence of their evangelical success and as commercial evidence of the new economic potential of the territory. For the Tupi, the feathered capes and the rituals associated with them served to establish their own communities and social orders within a colonial world, both outside and within Christianity. The technical mastery of Tupi plumage imitated the forms and textures of the natural world, as in the house, church, and modified them when cultural values dictated, as in lapponia. Within the Jesuit adelida, the accommodation of feathered cloaks, in their continued manufacture and use in both Tupi and Christian rituals, facilitated the process of conversion and the integration of Brazil into an increasingly global market. By tracing their interwoven histories, as mediated by marketplaces on both shores of the Atlantic, I hope to have given a glance into the complexities and processes by which the colonial enterprise played out between Brazil and Europe.

NOTES

1 This article is a synthesis of various sections of Amy Bonn, 'Feathered Identities and Plumed Performances: Aparitivos Introduções to Early Modern Brazil and Europe', PAD 20 (2007): 41-63. The author thanks the editors for their thoughtful feedback, in particular, to Laura Nold, Mischa Zilk and Sunny Yang for their critical comments and the Cultural and Artistic Exchange in the Making of the Modern World, 1900-1909 sessions at the 2012 CIHA conference in Melbourne. The notion 'Tupi' and 'Tupinambis' were terms applied by early modern missionaries—and thus taken up by later anthropologists and historians—to describe a large number of Native American groups within the same language family and having similar cultural affinities. The Tupi occupied over 4000 kilometers of the Brazilian coastline during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with a population of 1.5 to 2 million at the time of contact with Europeans.


3 This article was amplified and published in English as Alfred Metzner, 'Tupinambis: A Biological and Historical Survey', in The Tupinambis: An Ethnographic and Historical Survey, New York, 1980, pp. 121-142.

4 For excellent biographies of Tupi cultural leaders, see K. Sato, Tupinambis: A History of Brazilian Indians, New York, 1999, pp. 64-85.


7 The bun of the Agua Dasi was also referred to as the 'ضمير' (P. O.S. 1958), in addition to the 'ضمير' (P. O.S. 1958). The Agua Dasi bun was the 'ضمير' (P. O.S. 1958) and the 'ضمير' (P. O.S. 1958). The Agua Dasi bun was the 'ضمير' (P. O.S. 1958) and the 'ضمير' (P. O.S. 1958).
A New Method of Interpreting the Valois Tapestries, through a History of Catherine de Médicis

Author(s): PASCAL-FRANÇOIS BERTRAND
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A New Method of Interpreting the Valois Tapestries, through a History of Catherine de Médicis

In 1959, Frances A. Yates published the results of her research on the Valois tapestries, made in Brussels toward the end of the sixteenth century and today held in Florence. This prestigious ensemble comprises eight large pieces featuring fine workmanship and bright and lively colors, enhanced with gold and silver.¹ According to the English historian, William of Orange had the tapestries executed at the moment when François-Hercule d’Alençon-d’Anjou, the last son of Catherine de Médicis and Henri II of France (of the Valois dynasty), overturned the power of Philip II of Spain in Holland, took the title of the duc de Brabant, and made his entry into Antwerp (1582). Yates asserted that William then had the tapestries delivered to the queen mother by Dutch ambassadors who were eager to renew their alliance with her third son, King Henri III. Yates’s study, regarded as the definitive work on this set of hangings, is a good example of an impressive intellectual scaffolding resting on the most fragile of hypotheses, which have been transformed since their first writing into certitudes. Objections expressed by Jean Coural (1972), Roy Strong (1973), and Léon de Groër (1989), among others, have done little to weaken this study’s authority.²

Coural observed a fundamental flaw in Yates’s proposal, which claims that the series was woven in Antwerp, whereas the mark of the city of Brussels is affixed to the edge of six of the eight pieces, and two of the unidentified weavers’ monograms can also be seen there.³ Strong remarked that the tapestries’ originality lay in the presence of identifiable portraits in their foregrounds, interpreted until then as simple intermediaries between the festival scenes represented in the backgrounds and the viewer. He added that the tapestries could not be later than 1581, the date of the “magnificent” wedding of Anne d’Arques, duc de Joyeuse, to Marguerite de Lorraine, half-sister of the wife of Henri III, which was celebrated with the famous Ballet comique de la reine published in 1582,⁴ because no reference to it is made in the festivals represented in the weavings. De Groër moved the dating back even further, believing that the tapestries were commissioned around 1575 by the queen mother or

Pascal-François Bertrand is Professor of Art History at the Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux 3.

¹ Pascal-François Bertrand


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Simplified Valois Genealogy
(bold face for family members represented in Valois tapestries)

Charles de Valois, comte d’Angoulême (1459-1496)
m. Louise de Savoie (1476-1531)

François I (1494-1547)
comte d’Angoulême
king of France in 1515
1) m. 1514 Claude de France, daughter of Louis XII (1499-1524)
2) m. 1530 Eleanor of Austria, sister of Charles V

from the first marriage

Henri II (1519-1559)
duc d’Orléans, heir apparent 1536
king of France in 1547
m. 1533 Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589)

Madeleine (1520-1537)
m. 1532 James V, king of Scotland

Charles (1522-1545)
duc d’Angoulême, then duc d’Orléans

Marguerite (1523-1574)
duchesse de Berry in 1550
m. 1559 Emmanuel-Philibert, duc de Savoie

Jeanne d’Albret (1528-1572)
queen of Navarre in 1555
m. 1548 Antoine de Bourbon, comte de Vendôme (1518-1562)

François II
(1544-1560)
king of France in 1559
m. 1558 Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland

Élisabeth (1546-1568)
m. 1559 Philip II, king of Spain

Claude (1547-1575)
m. 1559 Charles III, duc de Lorraine

Charles-Maximilien
Charles IX (1550-1574)
m. 1560 king of France

Edouard-Alexandre
Henri III (1531-1589)
m. 1570 Elisabeth of Austria

Marguerite (1552-1615)
m. 1572 Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre in 1572

François-Hercule
Henri de Bourbon (1553-1610)
king of France, then under the name of Henri IV (in 1589)
1) m. 1572, Marguerite de Valois
2) m. 1600, Marie de Médicis

Christine (1565-1636),
m. 1589 Ferdinand I, grand duke of Tuscany

1 m. 1509 Charles, duc d’Alençon (d. 1525)
2 m. 1526 Henri d’Albret, king of Navarre (d. 1555)

from the second marriage

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by someone in her close entourage because Catherine de Médicis appears in all of the tapestries except one (given her superstitious nature and her interest in magic and astrology, to appear in all would have been inauspicious). De Groër presented four observations in support of this date: all of the members of the royal family represented in the hanging were living when the tapestries were executed (none of the queen’s dead children are shown); the faces of figures represented in the foreground correspond to portraits executed around 1575, such as that of Louise de Vaudémont, who, in February of that year, had just married Henri III; the costumes reflect the fashions of the 1570s, in particular the medium-sized ruff and the tall velvet hat, decorated on the front with jewels and small feathers, worn tilted back to the rear of the head; and finally—a weighty argument—none of the figures wears the chain of the Order of the Holy Spirit, founded by Henri III in 1578.

From this initial overview of the critics, it seems that almost nothing is known for certain about this tapestry series, which was inventoried in Florence in 1589 among the goods brought from France by Christine de Lorraine. It was Cecilia Lisi and Jean Ehrmann who thought they recognized it in the mention of a gold tapestry à figure, et fregio à grotesche et altro (with figures and a border of grotesques and more), presented by Catherine de Médicis with two other luxurious ensembles to her favorite granddaughter, Christine de Lorraine, perhaps on the occasion of her marriage to the grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand I. While the dimensions given in the inventory correspond with those of the Valois tapestries, the formula used to describe the tapestry à figure is most laconic. Furthermore, if it is accepted that the series inventoried in 1589 is the same as the one in Florence today, the description also indicates that the meaning of the set had been lost by the time this gift was recorded, a gift made relatively quickly after the weaving of the ensemble (whether it is dated to 1575 or 1582-1585).

There are two further questions: what is the subject of the Valois series and what is its meaning? In order to respond, it is necessary to investigate the nature of the relationship between the motifs represented in the tapestries (the portraits in the foregrounds and the festival scenes in the backgrounds), the initial function of the hangings, and finally the conditions in which this masterpiece was produced.

The Multivalent Subject of the Tapestries

It is known how much a work’s title influences perception of it and orients its meaning. In the second half of the sixteenth century, a work
of art could be intended to have more than one meaning. Since they aroused the interest of historians in the early twentieth century, the works in Florence have generally been called the “Valois tapestries,” or sometimes the “Fêtes des Valois.” These fairly vague denominations, which reflect the notion of a lost meaning, mark at the same time the beginning of an interpretation, centered on the identity of the life-sized portraits of the royal family in the early years of Henri III’s reign (figures represented laterally across the foreground of the hangings) and also on the identification of the grandiose and costly extravaganzas of the reign of Charles IX represented in the background. (For a simplified genealogy of the Valois dynasty, see p. 29.)

Among the members of the royal family, the queen mother, Catherine de Médicis, can be recognized first of all, in mourning, a dwarf at her feet, in the Carrousel des chevaliers bretons et irlandais à Bayonne (Tournament) (Fig. 1; titles in parentheses are those used by Frances Yates). To her right stands her daughter Marguerite de Valois and her daughter’s spouse, Henri de Navarre, in profile. Catherine’s daughter is also represented two more times in the series. She appears with her husband, to the left in the Fête nautique sur l’Adour (Whale) (Fig. 4), and there, between the two of them, stands Charles III, duc de Lorraine and widower of Claude de Valois, second daughter of Catherine de Médicis, who died in 1575, several days before the wedding of Henri III to Louise de Vaudémont. Marguerite de Valois also appears a third time, to the right in the Masquerade de l’éléphant (Elephant) (Fig. 5), between her brother François-Hercule d’Alençon and a young, unidentified man. Catherine’s two living sons each appear twice. Henri III, her favorite son, is shown alone, wearing antique costume, about to mount a horse in the Jeu de la quintaine (Quintain) (Fig. 2), and with his wife, Louise de Vaudémont, in the right foreground of the Attaque de l’île devant le château de Fontainebleau (Fontainebleau) (Fig. 3). Louise de Vaudémont appears again, to the right, in the Carrousel des chevaliers bretons et irlandais à Bayonne (Fig. 1), across from the queen mother and her daughter Marguerite, accompanied by a man and two other women. One of these last figures, seen from the back, was identified as possibly her half-sister, Marguerite de Lorraine, who, in 1581, married Anne, duc de Joyeuse, whose wedding, as cited above, was the occasion of the famous Ballet comique de la reine published in 1582. Finally François-Hercule d’Alençon, who was already seen with his sister Marguerite, stands holding a lance in his hand, to the right in the Combat à la barrière (Barriers) (Fig. 6).9

The background scenes recall the finest hours of the court of Catherine de Médicis, attesting to the magnificence and generosity of the
FIGURE 2
Jeu de la quintaine (Quintain). Brussels tapestry, unidentified atelier, c. 1575.
Wool, silk, gold, and silver, 387 x 400 cm.
Photo: Casa Editrice Sillabe, Livorno.

queen mother, who had no equal other than “her great uncle Pope Leo and Lord Lorenzo the Magnificent,” according to Pierre de Bourdeilles de Brantôme.¹⁰ Three of these scenes evoke the festivities at Bayonne in 1565, marking the end of the grand tour of France taken by Catherine and her young son Charles IX, after their meeting with her older
daughter Élisabeth (1546-1568), wife of Philip II of Spain. A fourth episode recalls a nautical party given at Fontainebleau, just before the departure in 1564 for the above-mentioned tour of France. The fifth scene, Fête aux Tuileries en l'honneur des ambassadeurs polonais (Polish Ambassadors) (Fig. 7), depicts the reception of the Polish ambassadors who came to the Tuileries in 1573 to elect Catherine’s second son, Henri d’Anjou, to the Polish throne. In this garden, “festivals, jousts, foot and horse combats” were given, as well as a court ballet, “the most beautiful ballet that was ever produced in the world,” according to Brantôme, where one could see Apollo on a rock, an allusion to Henri, and sixteen nymphs symbolizing the French provinces. A sixth festivity was the Combat à la barrière (Fig. 6), a frequent performance that could have been given at Fontainebleau in 1564, but also elsewhere. It should be recalled that Henri II died on July 10, 1559, following a wound received during a joust that pitted him against Gabriel de Montgomery, the captain of his Scottish guards, on the occasion of a tournament organized for June 30 to mark the wedding by proxy of Élisabeth with Philip II of Spain on June 22. A seventh scene, Mascarade à l’éléphant (Fig. 5), shows an extravagant masquerade, with an automated elephant under attack. There had been such a festival when François-Hercule d’Alençon-d’Anjou entered Antwerp in 1582, which allowed Yates to deduce that the tapestries were produced for that event, as no mention of a similar performance is known in the accounts of royal parties. This type of masquerade could have been given on other occasions, however, if the association is made to a painting in the style of Antoine Caron (c. 1520-c. 1579; collection Jean Ehmann) apparently done around 1600. Finally, an eighth scene, Départ de la Cour du château d’Anet (Journey) (Fig. 8), represents the royal retinue in procession before the Château d’Anet, where Queen Catherine is shown in a litter (an episode that according to Yates is an allusion to the journey of the duc d’Anjou to his new kingdom, Poland), and the young King Charles IX (d. 1574) rides at the head of the line (center foreground, facing out). Charles IX has the features of his brother Édouard-Alexandre, duc d’Anjou, who in 1574 succeeded him as Henri III.

The commonly used title of each of these pieces has been determined by the festivity represented (Yates’s organization of the tapestries in the series only partly follows the chronological order of the events depicted), and that title completely ignores the figures standing in the foreground. The primacy accorded to the festivals in the title of each tapestry has oriented the reading of the compositions, which have generally been understood as historiated scenes, framed by life-sized
portraits serving as mere *repoussoirs*, arranged in one or the other of the two lower corners of each tapestry (Fig. 1). Only Strong speaks first of the portraits, which are placed laterally in the foregrounds on terraces overlooking each historiated scene, therefore appearing to be superimposed on the scene itself. Neither he, nor anyone else, however, made a connection between the foreground and background compositions.

These two types of approaches to the meaning of the series do not go any further than the mere observation of a simple relationship between the background scene and the figures in the foreground, and thus miss the deeper meaning of the tapestries. They offer no definition of the relationship between the two levels of the image, which function as two juxtaposed spaces, held together by the surface of the tapestry itself. The “portrait space” is constituted by the illustrious members of the court, represented life-size, standing in the foreground in a clearly defined space, a terrace sometimes made concrete by the inclusion of a railing or marble steps (Fig. 7). Gathered into small groups (from two to four people), the members of the royal family are at once the attentive spectators of the festivities enacted in the background and the viewer’s “presenters” to the entertainments shown. The events figuring in the backgrounds constitute what can be called the “space of the historiated scene.” This space is generally closed at the front by the figures who stand, sit, or are shown half-length, watching the spectacle. They sometimes comment on it or even direct their gaze toward the viewers and invite them to admire the party, playing therefore the role of the Albertian “admonisher.”  

A distancing is at work, which results from the difference in scale of the figures belonging to one or the other of the spaces: those of the “portrait space” are of course larger than those of the “space of the historiated scenes” (Fig. 4).

The viewer is thus doubly implicated in the tapestries. The technique of taking the spectator aside is used to emphasize the interaction between the scenes. In these tapestries, viewers see their “doubles,” both in the figures of the “portrait space” and in the spectators of the “space of the historiated scenes.” This complex representational game evokes the “inverted still-life paintings” in Antwerp art of the 1550s, in which a still life in the foreground bears an ambiguous relationship to a religious scene in the background. Whatever the direction of the reading—from the “portrait space” to that of the “space of the historiated scene” or vice-versa—the tapestries put a similar device into play, with a message that can be understood as worthy of the royal family.

**FIGURE 3 (facing page)**

*Attaque de l’ile devant le château de Fontainebleau (Fontainebleau). Brussels tapestry, unidentified atelier, c. 1575.*

Wool, silk, gold, and silver, 404 x 344 cm.

Photo: Scala/Art Resource, New York.
A Double Allegorized Image of the Valois

The originality of the Valois hangings lies in their playful combinations, of famous people in the foreground, who link the series to woven ensembles of princely portraits intended as dynastic praise and as legitimizing the monarch or the reigning family, and of princely festivals in the background that have a political function or symbolic value. The
gold used in the weaving makes the cloth product itself precious, and
dignifies what is represented. The gold supports de Groër’s idea that the
tapestries were a commission from royalty or from the entourage of the
queen mother. It is the association of these factors that permits a new
reading of the series, which can be seen as a picture (not to say a portrait)
of Catherine de Médicis in 1575-1576, a difficult period in her life.

The queen mother was strongly affected by the death of her daughter
Claude de Lorraine several days before the wedding of Henri III, and she
did not find any comfort in her surviving children who lived with her at
court, or in the king, the duc d’Alençon, her daughter Marguerite de
Valois, or her son-in-law Henri de Navarre. She had to contend with
their conflicts, which had stirred up rebellion in a climate of national
malaise. Slanderous tracts about Catherine, such as the Discours merveilleux
de la vie, actions et déportements de la reine (appearing in the summer
of 1574), and the Reveille-matin des Français et de leurs voisins composé par
Eusèbe Philadelphie (1574; written in February 1573), denounced the
queen mother as primarily responsible for the country’s woes, censured
her actions, and condemned her private life. The tracts went so far as to
demand the replacement of the Valois monarchy, making a direct appeal
to the Guise family, and calling for the execution of Catherine.22 Henri
III criticized his sister for her libertinage—her real or supposed lovers. He
also had his brother d’Alençon, whom the king’s minions enjoyed
insulting without being reprimanded, placed under surveillance. In
vengeance, the queen mother’s daughter Marguerite had no trouble making
allies of her husband and her brother. The result is known: d’Alençon
fled to his properties in western France in September 1575; de Navarre
withdrew to his holdings in the southwest in early 1576 and converted to
Protestantism; and Marguerite was imprisoned (and only freed on the
intervention of her mother). The queen mother continued to negotiate
with the Protestants to sign the treaty of Beaulieu-lès-Loches, also called
the paix de Monsieur (May 7, 1576). The king made large concessions to
the Protestants, and his brother d’Alençon saw the largest profits, re-
ceiving enormous additional privileges from the Crown and taking the
title of the duc d’Anjou.23

Catherine de Médicis was the inspiration for national reconciliation
and unity that drove the peace edict of 1576, and she can be seen as using
the tapestry series to political ends. It presented a dignified image of the
royal family, thereby glossing over the family discord and the rumors that
caused it, placing Catherine with her children at her side next to the
festivals of the previous reign, which symbolically recalled the moral
principles in which the queen mother believed. Care was taken not to
represent the king in the company of his brother and his sister, while Marguerite is shown with her brother François-Hercule, duc d’Alençon.

In Figure 1, Catherine de Médicis appears in the company of her daughter Marguerite and her son-in-law Henri de Navarre, across from the spouse of the king, Louise de Vaudémont, a princess without a fortune and without a hope of succession, apparently surrounded by her own relatives (the Guises, of whom she was a distant cousin), observing a performance of the *Carrousel des chevaliers bretons et irlandais à Bayonne*. This court ballet, which was held in Bayonne on June 25, 1565, involved a simulated battle of knights on horseback, the one side representing Virtue and the other, Love. In the background appear, to the right, the chariot of the Cardinal Virtues, in which Prudence, Valor (or Strength), Justice, and Temperance have all taken their places, and, to the left, the chariot of Love carrying Venus and Cupid, surrounded by a cortège of putti as indicated by the *Recueil des choses notables qui ont été faites à Bayonne* (Paris, 1566). The message is clear. It recalls the Valois alliances concluded through marriages with the Bourbons and the Guises, as well as the principal virtues that Catherine’s daughters had to possess.

In Figure 2, the image of Henri III associated with the *Jeu de la quintaine* evokes the skill and the valor of the king, represented as an ideal prince, in the costume of the *imperator*, holding the commander’s baton in his right hand. This image is strengthened by the representation of costumed knights who, during the Bayonne festivals on June 19, had participated in the *jeu de bagues*, played on horseback with galloping riders trying to run a lance through a suspended ring. The *Recueil des choses notables qui ont été faites à Bayonne* describes the king, Charles IX, as the Roman Emperor Trajan, his brother Henri following him disguised as an Amazon and the “chevaliers Maure, Espagnol, Romain, Grec, et Albanais, accompagnés de dames de leur pays” and other lords disguised as “femmes à l’antique” with masked faces (see, for example, the small male figure in the background scene holding a mask in his right hand, just behind the large figure of Henri III in the left center foreground). Henri III also appears, accompanied by his wife, in the tapestry of the *Attaque de l’île devant le château de Fontainebleau* (Fig. 3), a spectacle that included the freeing of women imprisoned on an enchanted island by the king and his brothers. The meaning seems evident: the Monarchy liberates its obedient subjects.

Marguerite de Valois is represented, as has been seen, with her mother. She also appears with her husband de Navarre and her brother d’Alençon. The *Fête nautique sur l’Adour* (Fig. 4), where Marguerite and de Navarre are shown with Charles de Lorraine, recalls the sumptuous
banquet given by Catherine de Médicis on June 24, 1565, in a “large octagonal room,” set up on the island of Adour, surrounded by trees “where the queen my mother,” wrote Marguerite in her memoirs, “arranged small niches all around, and in each one a round table for twelve people.” During the crossing of the guests to the island, a water and music spectacle was given, during which an attack on an artificial whale took place. The theme was peace between France and Spain, with universal peace represented by the gods of nature (Neptune, Tritons, sirens) around the king of France, following the defeat of the monster of war (the whale). On the banks, shepherds (an allusion to the French provinces) danced to the sound of the French horn. Finally, after dinner, a ballet of nymphae took place. Here again the symbolism is clear: the celebration of universal peace and the commemoration of the festivals, including the “Paradis d'Amour,” held in honor of Marguerite de Valois’s wedding to Henri de Navarre (1572). (This was the infamous “vermilion wedding,” still in everyone's memory, red with the blood of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.)

Mascarade à l’éléphant (Fig. 5), a kind of military ballet around a representation of an elephant, symbol of the royal person, evokes the traditional notion of force, strength, and power. The tapestry is a representation of the three living children of Catherine de Médicis, King Henri III (symbolized by the ballet’s elephant), with Marguerite de Valois and François-Hercule d’Alençon, standing in the foreground to the right. D’Alençon is also represented in the foreground of the Combat à la barrière (Fig. 6), a frequent joust in tournaments and festivals, which emphasized the courage and valor of the armed knights fighting with long spears. After the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, d’Alençon was advanced by the queen mother and the king in the hopes of bringing peace back to the kingdom.

The last two tapestries no longer show the queen mother and her children, but people of uncertain or at least debated identity, who must have been close to the Crown, the favorites of the king. Scholars have recognized Henri de Guise or Anne de Joyeuse in the foreground of the Fête au Tuileries en l'honneur des ambassadeurs polonais (Fig. 7). Henri de Guise belonged to the private Council and under Charles IX and Henri III was grand master or “first servant” to these kings, until he opposed the king in 1578 and was distanced from royal affairs in 1585. Anne de Joyeuse, one of the principal favorites of Henri III, was raised to the title of duke in 1581, the year in which he married Marguerite de Lorraine, the king’s half-sister. Wouldn’t it be better to seek the identity of the three figures represented in the right foreground of the Départ de la cour du château d’Anet (Fig. 8) among the companions of the trip to Poland.
These examples should suffice to show that the Valois tapestries can no longer be viewed, as Yates thought, as representing a celebration of the arrival of d’Alençon-d’Anjou in Holland. They are instead a veritable Histoire de Catherine de Médicis or a Histoire des derniers Valois. The queen mother appears in the weavings, as she appeared in the triumphal entries into towns, surrounded by the royal family, by her children whom she molded in her own image. Indeed, she imbued them with Neo-

(Pibrac, the maréchal de Bellegarde, Larchant, Villequier, and so forth) and the king’s favorites (the duc d’Épernon, the comte de Quélus, d’Entragues, Bussy d’Amboise, and so forth), since the royal retinue is shown in the background? It is the case, however, that the identification of undocumented portraits remains one of the most delicate tasks to carry out.32

FIGURE 5

FIGURE 6 (facing page)
Combat à la barrière (Barriers). Brussels tapestry, unidentified atelier, c. 1575. Wool, silk, gold, and silver, 386 x 328 cm. Photo: Casa Editrice Sillabe, Livorno.
Platonic values and taught the princes how to hold court. Under the guise of representing festivals from the previous reign, the queen mother made clear that she still held the reins of power during the 1575-1576 truce in the wars of religion. The series therefore offers a double image of Catherine de Médicis and her family: the first, demonstrating the supernatural and atemporal nature of the Valois dynasty; the second, showing the harmony, concord, and peace that the queen mother sought her
entire life (though vainly), believing as she did in the merits of the peace edicts. These would include the Peace of Amboise (1563), the Peace of St. Germain (1570) after the second and third wars of religion in France (1567-1568), and the Peace of Beaulieu (1576).

Quickly Executed Tapestries

It is appropriate to make two additional observations to support the rereading proposed here. The first, of a technical order, concerns the conditions of weaving and the place of execution. If the series was a royal commission, it could be asked why it was made in Brussels, given that Paris had ateliers founded by Henri II in the middle of the century. Nevertheless, Parisian weaving activity was modest and slower in delivery than in Flanders, which had a larger work force. The monarchy’s need quickly to produce a forceful image of the Crown required a rapid production that the Brussels workshops were much better equipped to assume.34

The second point is that the weaving of the Valois tapestries may explain why the series called the Histoire d’Artémise, planned earlier (in 1562), was only executed much later (beginning in 1600). This series was based on a poem by the Parisian philanthropist and apothecary Nicolas Houel, who wrote that its purpose was the glorification of Catherine de Médicis educating her son, the future Charles IX, following the example of the ancient queen Artemisia, widow of King Mausolus (ruler of Caria, d. 353 B.C.; modern southwestern Turkey), who reared her son Lygdamis.35 This series was not woven before the Valois tapestries, however, because there was no reason to: the Valois tapestries provided a clear image of the queen mother and her family in place of the veiled allegory of Catherine de Médicis proposed in the Histoire d’Artémise.36

It should be pointed out, however, that these two series of tapestries were executed twenty-five years apart, but from drawings by the painter Antoine Caron, who made all at the same time. It was also during this period that Caron drew the illustrations for the Histoire française de notre temps, commonly called the Histoire des rois de France, another poem by Houel intended to glorify Catherine de Médicis.37 The drawings of the Histoire d’Artémise (Fig. 9) were specifically executed to serve as models for tapestries38 and so, it seems, were those for the Histoire des rois de France (which were never woven). The drawings linked to the Valois tapestries represent only the festivals, however, and do not carry borders, whereas the other two sets of drawings have extremely elaborate borders. The Valois tapestry drawings could perhaps be the first thoughts for a
woven cycle or for a completely different project (Fig. 10). No study drawings for the portraits have been found. Could Caron, who was an important portraitist, have also been the author of the portraits in the Valois tapestries? This question leads to the reconsideration of the attribution of the cartoons that Yates suggested should be given to the Flemish painter Lucas de Heere (1534-1584). The English historian based her hypothesis on the fact that the Flemish painter was a confirmed cartoon maker and a portrait and costume specialist, that he had known Catherine de Médicis (around 1560), and that, in the service of William of Orange, he had worked for the glory of d’Alençon-d’Anjou in giving the drawings for the festivities around the entry of this prince to Antwerp. The argument is weak and, as if trying to reinforce it, Yates added that she thought she recognized the emblem of Lucas de Heere in two tapestries (a siren playing a lyre with a sailor hanging from her tail that the painter used in _libri amicorum_). This motif can be clearly recognized,
FIGURE 10
Antoine Caron, The Water Festival at Bayonne, June 24, 1565 (Whale), Paris, 1570-1574. Black and brown ink, and some black ink, gray-brown wash, white heightening, on paper, 34.9 x 49.3 cm. Pierpont Morgan Library, Dept. of Drawings and Prints, New York.

but is it really the painter’s emblem? The complicated question of attribution goes beyond the scope of this paper, which is focused on the meaning of the Valois tapestries, but it seems necessary at least to raise it, even if for the moment another name is not proposed. In any case, it would be better to return the work to an anonymous author rather than to persist in a highly debatable attribution.

In conclusion, the queen mother’s shipment of the set of tapestries to Florence did not occasion a slippage of its meaning, notwithstanding Yates’s argument.41 In offering the series to her granddaughter Christine de Lorraine, Catherine de Médicis must have wanted to remind her one last time of the values that she, Christine, had been taught at the French court after the death of her mother, Claude. In the scenes, the young grand duchess could view a commemoration of the history of her grandmother.42 Moreover, the hangings from France lost none of their grandeur next to the best pieces of the Medici collection, such as the luxurious suite from Brussels of the Histoire de la Création de l’Homme
(traditionally attributed to Jan C. Vermeyen) or the famous Histoire de Joseph designed by Jacopo Pontormo, Francesco Salviati, and Agnolo Bronzino woven in Florence from 1546 to 1553 in the manufactory founded by Cosimo I de’ Medici. On the contrary, the series found its rightful place amid the Florentine series glorifying the memory of the illustrious members of the Medici family, Cosimo the Elder, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Clement VII, produced from cartoons by the Flemish Giovanni Stradano (Jan van der Straet) and designed to decorate the rooms at the Palazzo Vecchio named for these Medici family members. In offering a tapestry series telling her own history to her granddaughter, Catherine de Médicis therefore inscribed herself in the woven pantheon of Tuscany, the grand duchy that she had vainly coveted her entire life.

—Translated by Pamela J. Warner

Appendix

The identity of the figures in the foreground of the Valois tapestries. The titles in parentheses are those used by Frances A. Yates in The Valois Tapestries (London, 1959 and 1975). (When an identification is uncertain or debated, the names of the authors of each proposition are given in parentheses.)

Carrousel des chevaliers bretons et irlandais à Bayonne (Tournament) (Fig. 1)

On the left, Catherine de Médicis in mourning, one of her dwarfs at her feet.53 Behind the queen mother, on her right, her daughter Marguerite de Valois and her husband Henri de Navarre. On the right, Louise de Vaudémont (wife of Henri III) accompanied by a man and two women, one of whom is seen from the back.

The woman seen from the back on the right has been identified as Marguerite de Lorraine-Vaudémont (half-sister of the queen Louise de Vaudémont), who married Anne d'Arques, duc de Joyeuse, in 1581.44 For the group on the right, Gertrude T. Van Ysselsteyn proposed the name of Louise de Vaudémont, her brother-in-law, Charles de Lorraine, whom she calls François by mistake, and his sister, the duchess of Bavaria.45 In the figure of the dwarf, Van Ysselsteyn also thought she recognized a child, Henri, born in 1573 to François de Bourbon-Montpensier and Renée d'Anjou, and then the presumed heir to the throne.46

Jeu de la quintaine (Quintain) (Fig. 2)

Henri III, in antique costume, about to mount a horse. Behind him, to the right, one of the king's favorites, whom Ivanoff believes is the duc de Joyeuse.47
Attaque de l’île devant le château de Fontainebleau (Fontainebleau) (Fig. 3)

On the right, Henri III and his wife, Louise de Vaudémont.

Fête nautique sur l’Adour (Whale) (Fig. 4)

On the left, Marguerite de Valois (in three-quarter view), Charles III of Lorraine (full face), and Henri de Navarre (three-quarter view from the back).

Mascarade à l’éléphant (Elephant) (Fig. 5)

On the right, Marguerite de Valois and her young brother François-Hercule, duc d’Alençon. Between them, an unidentified young man, perhaps Edmund Sheffield, the stepson and guard of the earl of Leicester,48 or the young James of Scotland, son of Mary Stuart, whose mother belonged to the Lorraine-Guise family.49

Combat à la barrière (Barriers) (Fig. 6)

On the right, François-Hercule, the duc d’Alençon. On the left, the man in armor holding a helmet, the young squire, and the man holding a lance are unidentified. Yates thought she recognized in these three figures a group portrait of the Nassau family, with William of Orange himself as the man in armor holding a helmet and his second son, the young Maurice de Nassau.50 Van Ysseltsteyn, on the other hand, identified the man in armor as Jean Casimir and the man with the lance as Guillaume-Louis de Nassau, the older son of Jean, elder brother of the Orange family, and defender of the northern provinces.51 It seems more logical to me to see them as some of the duc d’Alençon’s friends.

Fête aux Tuileries en l’honneur des ambassadeurs polonais (Polish Ambassadors) (Fig. 7)

On the left, two figures, one facing out and the other seen from behind. The man facing out has been recognized as Henri, duc de Guise, responsible for the reception of the Polish ambassadors (according to Ivanoff,52 followed by Barbara A. Heezen-Stoll),53 or (according to Yates)54 Anne, duc de Joyeuse. The latter identification was rejected by Léon de Gruyter,55 in spite of the strong resemblance to Joyeuse, who should have, if the reference to his marriage is correct, worn the chain of the Order of the Holy Spirit.

Départ de la cour du château d’Anet (Journey) (Fig. 8)

On the right, three unidentified figures. Ivanoff stated that the man leaning on a sword was Jean-Louis Nogaret de La Valette, one of Henri III’s ministers, who in 1581 received the duchy of Épernon and was named colonel general of the infantry.56 Behind him Ivanoff recognized the famous chronicler Pierre de Bourdeilles de Brantôme.57 According to Yates, the man leaning on the sword is
Ludovic de Nassau (1538-1574), one of the younger brothers of William of Orange, who had persuaded Jeanne d’Albret to consent to the marriage of her son to Marguerite de Valois.39 Yates also says that the two others are Christophe de Palatinat and Henri de Nassau. The former was with Ludovic de Nassau at the end of November 1573 at Blamont, in Lorraine, when Henri (future king of France as Henri III) left for his new kingdom in Poland. According to Van Ysselsteyn, these two men are Adolphe de Nassau (d. 1568), his brother Louis, and Philippe de Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde, Henri III’s ambassador to Holland.39 These identifications were rejected by de Groër.60 Heezen-Stoll proposes to identify the man with the sword as Bussy d’Amboise, one of François-Hercule d’Alençon’s men, who distinguished himself in 1577 at the siege of Maubeuge and neighboring places.61 This identification, if it could be confirmed, would have the advantage of allowing the dating of the tapestry to before 1579, the date of the assassination of this formidable duelist, given that all of the figures with portraits in the foreground were living at the moment the tapestries were produced. In any case, the identity of these three figures should in fact be sought among Henri III’s favorites, and not those of the House of Orange.

NOTES

This study began as a paper read at the symposium Les Médicis et la France, held at the château de Blois on September 25, 1999, on the occasion of the exhibition Les Trésors des Médicis. I would like to thank Thierry Crépin-Leblond, Guy Delmarcel, and Thomas Campbell for their remarks and suggestions which helped shape the final form of this article. In memoriam Françoise Bardon (1925-2005).


3. It is true that counterfeits were produced in Antwerp. Weavers from that city purposely used the Brussels mark to fool clients. The weaver François Spiering, famous for having directed a workshop in Delft, formerly had a workshop in Antwerp, called “à l’écuasson de Bruxelles,” a badge that he used in his products. By associating it with his monogram, he introduced doubts as to the place of execution of the tapestries: see Guy Delmarcel, La Tapisserie flamande du XVe au XVIIIe siècle (Paris, 1999), 178. The former curator of the Royal Museums of Brussels, Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, therefore supposed that Spiering could have been the producer of the Valois tapestries, which Yates recalled (Yates, The Valois Tapestries, 41-43), but Yates proposed instead that the tapestries had been executed by Josse van Herneele and François Sweerts, because these weavers had received a payment in 1582 for the
delivery of two rooms of tapestries destined for d’Alençon-d’Anjou at Middelbourg. Van Hensel was a weaver of Brussels who lived in Antwerp between 1582 and 1586, when he emigrated to Hamburg, where he died in 1589. His monogram (that of Sweerts) is different from those seen on the Valois tapestries; see Delmarcel, La tapisserie flamande, 177-78, 366. Yates’s hypothesis has been long-lived: for instance, it was taken up again by Giovanna Damiani in Tréson des Médicis, ex. cat. (Munich: Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, 1998), cat. 25. Courel’s opinion was, on the other hand, supported by Roy Strong, then by Jean Ehrmann, Antoine Caron: Peinture des tâtes et des massacres (Paris, 1986), 190; Léon de Groet, “Les tapisseries des Valois,” 128; Amaury Lefebvre, “Le XVIe siècle: Une inspiration européenne,” in Histoire de la Tapisserie en Europe du Moyen Âge à nos jours, ed. Fabienne Joubert, Amaury Lefebvre; Pas-cal-François Bertrand (Paris, 1995), 83-84, 128, 132; and most recently by Delmarcel, La tapisserie flamande, 127, 139; and lastly by Lucía Meoni in a catalogue entry in Gli arazzi dei Granduchi: Un patrimonio da non dimenticare, exh. cat. (Florence: Galleria degli Uffizi, 2006), cat. 4.


6. De Groet’s conclusions were timidly repeated by Wolfgang Brassat (Tapisseries und Polaik: Funk- türen, Kontexte und Rezeption eines repräsentativen Mediums [Berlin, 1992], 106, 210-12, cat. 49), who mentions them without full support. Lucía Meoni ignores them in the first volume of her monumental study on tapestries in Florentine museums (Gli Arazzi nei musei fiorentini. La collezione medicea. Catalogo completo, vol. 1, La manifattura di Cosimo I a Cosimo II [1545-1621] [Livorno, 1998], 95-96).

7. The set of tapestries à figure, et fregio a grotesche et alter appears in an inventory of furniture brought from France by Christine de Lorraine to Florence. Their dimensions were 6½ “braccio” tall by 60 wide, or about 3.80 m by 35 m (1 braccio = 0.584 m), which corresponds to the dimensions of the tapestries in Florence: the average height is about 3.80 m and the width is about 36 m. See Jean Ehrmann, “Desins d’Antoine Caron,” Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire de l’Art Français (1956): 122-25 (Ehrmann indicates that he owed this discovery to Cecilia Lisi). The objects cited in this inventory (of which three versions exist; see Yates, The Valois Tapestries, 147 nn. 4 and 6) are said to have been given by Catherine de Médicis during her lifetime, which means before January 5, 1589, to her granddaughter Christine de Lorraine, whom she had reared after the death in 1575 of the girl’s mother, Claude de Valois. They are carefully distinguished from other objects, inventoried separately, and left as a bequest to Christine de Lorraine by Catherine de Médicis (there are no tapestries among these last objects). Jean Ehrmann and Cecilia Lisi deduced that the gift noted in the first list was made at the conclusion of the marriage contract negotiations between Christine de Lorraine and Ferdinand I of Tuscany, in October-December 1588 at Blois (the contract was signed on December 8).

8. In 1904, the tapestries were called the Fêtes d’Henri III (Henri Bouchot, Exposition des Primitifs français, exh. cat. [Paris 1904], nos. 280-81). The title “Valois tapestries” was given by Jean Ehrmann in “Desins d’Antoine Caron.” On the question of the titles of the hangings, see Ehrmann, Antoine Caron, 189.

9. On the various identifications, see Appendix. To the studies already cited, two others should be added that concentrate on the identification of certain figures: Gertrude T. van Ysselsteyn, “Wil- helmus: Naar aanleiding van Frances A. Yates, The Valois Tapestries” (Wilhelmus: In Pursuance of Frances A. Yates, The Valois Tapestries), in De Bloëing . . . : L’Âge d’or de la tapisserie flamande. Colloque international 1961 (Brussels, 1969), 329-86 (this is not very reliable because the author seems unfamiliar with the history of the Valois); and Barbara A. Heeren-Still, “Le prince infortune. Overwegingen met betrekking tot François-Her- cule de Valois en de Valoisstipperijen, zijn relaties met de Nederlanden en Engeland.” (The unlucky prince: François-Hercule de Valois and the Valois Tapestries: His Relations with the Netherlands and England), De Zeventende Eeuw 6, no. 2 (1990): 1-46 (this is much more rigorous than the former essay, but it has been overlooked by most authors).


13. Ibid.

14. Charles IX died in 1574; thus, as there is no dead person represented in these tapestries, he is replaced here by his brother Henri III.

15. Yates, The Valois Tapestries, 73.

16. The traditional titles for the tapestries are used here.

17. E.g., in the Carnaval des chevaliers bretons et islandais à Bayonne (sechs) or again in the Fête aux Tuileries en l’honneur des ambassadeurs polonais (a border parallel with the lower edge of the tapestry).

18. This compositional principle already appears in the drawings by Antoine Caron that have been linked to the tapestries. See n. 39. In the history of painting, it is Alberti who invented the device of placing between the scene depicted and the spectator a linking figure who at the same time faced the viewer and designated the interior of the painting. On this linking figure, or admonisher, see Pierre Geogel and Anne-Marie Lecocq, chap. 18, “Donner à voir,” in La peinture dans la peinture (Paris, 1987), 179-81. “J’aime qu’il y ait parmi les protagonistes de la scène, un admoniteur qui nous montre ce qui se passe ou qui, de la main, nous invite à voir, ou une figure menaçante, au visage courroucé et au regard tourné, qui cherche à nous empêcher d’aller vers eux, ou quelqu’un qui nous révèle un danger ou une chose merveilleuse dans la scène, ou qui s’invite à pleurer ou à rire avec eux.” Leon Battista Alberti, Della pittura, ed. C. Grayson (Rome, 1975), 72 (chap. 42).


20. On the representation of royalty, see Brassin, Tapisseries und Polaik, 71-75. On the genealogical series, such as the Généalogie de la maison de Nassau delivered between 1530 and 1533 to Henri III de Nassau (known through watercolor drawings attri- buted to Bernard van Orley); the tapestries of the Ottheinrich family, Palatinate elector (around 1535; Heinimuseum in Neuburg an der Donau and Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich); the so-called “des Covy” tapestry in which the dukes of Saxony (including Jean-Frédéric the Magnani- mous, one of the leaders of the League of Schmal-
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23. Ibid., 389-92. See also n. 31.

24. Catherine de Médicis had tried to negotiate a marriage with a daughter of the king of Sweden, which would perhaps have helped to keep Poland.

25. The man holding a mask in his right hand, behind Henri III, is placed here to explain the meaning of the disguise in the scene in the background, where there is a cortège of knights, including at the left foreground two disguised as Amazon as well as a barbarian with a quiver full of arrows. This disguising as women was sometimes practiced during festivities. Brantôme was careful to note that the knights’ faces were masked; cited by Ivanoff, "Les fêtes à la cour des derniers Valois," 102.


28. Ibid., 61. The marriage of Catherine’s sister Marguerite de Valois and the Protestant Henri de Navarre resulted in the end of the policy of reconciliation pursued since the Peace of Saint-Germain (1570). The wedding was celebrated from August 18 to 21, 1572. During the night of August 23-24 (on the eve of St. Bartholomew’s Day, August 24), however, the assassination of the Protestant leaders, including Gaspard II de Coligny, directed by the Guises and the royal troops, led to general rioting by the bourgeoisie and the fanati-
cized lower classes which attacked all of the Protes-
tants then in Paris for the wedding. The massa-
ces, which continued in the provinces until October, claimed an estimated 3,000 in Paris, and 70,000 in all of France, and reignited the civil war between Catholics and Protestants.

29. In the elephant in the Macarade, Jardine and Broton (Global Interests, 128-31) see an expression of ancient military power and imperial triumphalism inherited from François I. The elephant is used to suggest the strength of the French Crown in one of the scenes in the Galerie François I at Fontainebleau. The French monarch had commis-
sioned the conquest tapestry of the History of Scipio, a work featuring elephants that was still used by the Valois for ceremonies, festivals, and more specifically for the festivals at Bayonne. The Mac-
arcade could have been derived from the Scipio tapestry Batalla de Zama.


31. François-Hercule d’Alençon, who dreamed of a crown, was cruelly mocked by his brother Henri III, and the prince fled on September 15, 1575. Catherine de Médicis thought that d’Alençon was going to revive the troops of the Malcontents, and she tried to catch up with him. She reached an accord, the Edict of Beaujeu (May 7, 1576), called the “Peace of Montepie,” because all clauses were so favorable to d’Alençon and his allies.

32. See Appendix for the various identifications proposed for the figures in the foreground.

33. On the lessons Catherine de Médicis gave to her children, see esp. Janine Garrisson, Catherine de Médicis: L’impossible harmonie (Paris, 2002), 73-77.


36. Valérie Auclair ("De l’eslumare à la chronique contemporaine: L’histoire de la Royne Artheumse de l’invention de Nicolas Houel," Jornal de la Renaissance 1 [2000]: 155-88) showed that Houel still had not offered the queen his manuscript in 1580 and therefore the set could not have been woven before that. The project of the Histoire d’Artemise was only put on the loom beginning in 1600, the year after the death of Antoine Caron, who had provided the models. It thus appears to be a posthumous homage to the painter, as were the engravings made after his drawings that illustrated the Images de Philostrate, published in Paris in 1614. See Pascal-François Bertrand, Les tapisseries des Barberini et la décoration d’intérieur dans la Rome baroque (Turnhout, 2005), 103-12.

37. Ehrmann, Antoine Caron, 84-104.

38. Most of the drawings for the Histoire d’Artemise were attributed to Antoine Caron, and several sheets were attributed to the Belfortian artist Nicolò dell’Abate, his son Giulio Camillo, and Baptiste Pellerin. See esp. the entry on Caron by Cécile Scallier, in the Allgemeines Künstlerlex-
ikon, vol. 16 (Munich and Leipzig, 1997), 511-14. The most common dating of the drawings is that of 1562-1571, but, according to Jean Ehrmann, "Antoine Caron: Tapisserie et tableau inédits dans la série de la reine Artemise," Bulletin de la Société de l’Art Français (1964): 31-32, they were probably executed over a period of about fifteen years.

39. The six extant preparatory drawings for the eight tapestries of the Fêtes des Valois are generally dated to the end of the reign of Charles IX, around
1570-1574 (Ehrmann, "Dessins d’Antoine Caron"; Yates, The Valois Tapestries, pls. IX-XI; Ehrmann, Antoine Caron, 189-200). Are these projects for a painted or woven cycle celebrating only the festivals? Are these drawings that were re-used and to which someone added the portraits in the foregrounds at the last minute? Nothing permits a more precise account of the commission. As in every weaving commission, these transpositions were subject to more or less major modifications, which previous authors have attempted to detect. Take as an example the drawing said to represent the Départ pour la chasse (Louvre), but which shows instead the Cour nomade de Charles IX quittant le château d’Anet (Monique Châtenet and Françoise Boudon, "Les logis du roi de France au XVIe siècle," in Architecture et vie sociale: L’organisation intérieure des grandes demeures à la fin du Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance, ed. Jean Guillaumé, Actes du colloque, Tours, June 6-10, 1988 [Paris, 1994], 65, fig. 1, a subject that can also be found in the tapestry entitled Départ en voyage de la Cour.) According to Nicolas Ivanoff, the subject of the drawing for that tapestry would be the departure for the Grand Voyage de France that Catherine undertook with her son in 1564-1565 to appease tensions, to introduce the young king to his subjects, and to reaffirm the monarchy whose authority had been weakened by a first religious war (Nicolas Ivanoff, "Les fêtes à la cour des derniers Valois d’après les tapisseries flamandes du Musée des Offices à Florence," Revue du XVIe siècle 19 [1992-1993]: 96-121). Yates sees in these festivities the departure of the duc d’Anjou (the future Henri III) for his kingdom in Poland (1573). In both cases, the Court did not leave from Anet. These chronologically unlikely events, which are not out of the ordinary, will not be belabored, especially where the glorification of a person or a family is concerned. The episode depicted more likely commemorates the 1567 arrival of the king at the château d’Anet, which belonged at the time to the duc d’Aumale, son-in-law of Diane de Poitiers, governor of Burgundy, and Grand Veneur (chief huntsman) of France (De Groët, "Les tapisseries des Valois," 126). Let it also be remembered that Catherine de Médicis passed through Anet in 1562 on her way to the siege of Rouen, without visiting Diane de Poitiers, disgraced after the death of Henri II. It should be added that it was at Anet that François I signed the marriage contract uniting the future Henri II to Catherine de Médicis. The date was April 24, 1531—and therefore long before the castle was rebuilt by Philibert de l’Orme beginning in 1546.

40. Coming from Ghent, de Heere took his apprenticeship in the studio of Frans Floris, where he taught himself the production of cartoons for stained-glass windows and tapestries. Around 1560, he came to work at Fontainebleau, where, linked to the service of Catherine de Médicis, he executed tapestry cartoons (now lost). Shortly thereafter, he returned to his native city. A Protestant fleeing the persecutions of the tyrannical Spanish regime in Holland, he found refuge in England beginning in 1567. He finally appeared as a painter to the Stadtholder of Holland.

41. Yates, The Valois Tapestries, 120, 126.

42. As mentioned in the text, the meaning of the hangings was lost by 1589, at least for the recorder of the inventory of goods belonging to Christine de Lorraine in Florence.


44. Ibid., 114.


46. Ibid.


57. Ibid.

58. Yates, The Valois Tapestries, 76-78.

