Globalising the Periphery:

Poland-Lithuania and Cultural Entanglement, 1587–1668

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Abstract

French nobleman Gaspard de Tende (1618–1697) asserted that most early modern Europeans knew the Polish-Lithuanian state only through representations, for 'though *Poland* is not very remote from us, yet one may say, it is almost unknown, few persons going thither to travel'. This dissertation examines representations of Polishness: both those formed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth itself, and those articulated in the rest of Europe. Created in 1569 from the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the new state needed to construct a convincing story of its origins and place in the world. My study examines how these stories were narrated and disseminated by images and objects of material culture. But while these artefacts acted as native Polish-Lithuanian cultural forms and signifiers of nationhood, they were often appropriated from abroad. Thus, Ottomanesque costume, eastern carpets and Persianate weapons emerged paradoxically as the vehicles through which Poland-Lithuania's political classes claimed their European and classical roots. Highlighting practices of mobility, adaptation and cultural confusion, the five chapters of this study aim to demonstrate the contingent and unstable nature of national and ethnic appellations, both as they pertain to self-identifications and the artefacts that mediated them. Poland-Lithuania is a useful methodological laboratory in this context precisely because of the way it challenges the theories of nations with distinctive cultures, and suggests instead that the discourse of distinctiveness is itself an outcome of cultural confusion.

The first part of this project focuses on shifting representations and perceptions of Polish-Lithuanian costume (and, therefore, custom), both domestically and outside the Commonwealth's borders. In so doing, it explores processes of transculturation, that is, when sustained contact with other traditions changes the way one defines their own cultural milieu.

Chapter 1 addresses the integration of Ottoman-style costume into Polish-Lithuanian self-image; it traces the dissemination of this costume across the country and asks how it contributed to the growing self-identification of the Commonwealth's heterogeneous nobility as a united nation located on Europe's eastern periphery. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the cultural ambivalence of Polish-Lithuanian costume—Ottomanesque yet European—as it was perceived in Rome, Paris and Amsterdam. These three chapters combined thus reconsider the relationship between nativeness and foreignness, centrality and peripherality, and Europe and its others, by demonstrating that those categories were by no means antithetical poles, but depended on one another for their meaning and relevance.

The second part shifts away from cultural misunderstandings triggered by costume to a cultural confusion that was generated by raw materials and naturalist imagery. To this effect, chapters 4 and 5 discuss Baltic amber and Michał Boym's illustrated treatise *Flora sinensis* (1656): two cultural resources that modern Polish commentators have classed as quintessentially 'Polish'. This study, however, demonstrates that these phenomena escaped easy categorisations in the early modern period, primarily due to their portability. A more horizontal narrative is advocated, one which treats with an equal concern all the various places where Baltic amber and Boym's *Flora sinensis* were interpreted and re-employed. Stressing the ceaseless transformation and adaptation of ideas about these materials, part 2 accordingly foregrounds the on-going creation (and re-creation) of cultural forms that cannot be simply assigned to a single cultural region and its historical traditions.

The aims of this thesis are thus both empirical and methodological; it presents several case studies that demonstrate how Polish-Lithuanian material culture was the product of intersecting traditions and customs, while at the same time using this heterogeneous region as a

critical site for arguing that the material signifiers of nationhood and ethnic distinctiveness often appeared amidst cultural confusion. This thesis allows this cultural messiness to come to the fore.

Résumé en français

Le noble français Gaspard de Tende (1618–1697) affirme qu'à l'époque de la première modernité européenne, on ne connaissait l'état polono-lituanien qu'à travers ses représentations : « La Pologne n'est pas vraiment éloignée de nous, mais d'une certaine façon, elle est presqu'inconnue puisque seulement quelques personnes y ont voyagé. » Cette thèse étudie les représentations de la polonité telle qu'elles sont véhiculées à la république de Pologne-Lituanie ainsi qu'à l'étranger. Créé en 1569 à partir du royaume de Pologne et du grand-duché de Lituanie, le nouvel état a besoin de se construire une histoire convaincante à propos de ses origines et de sa place dans le monde. Ma recherche porte sur la façon dont ces histoires ont été racontées et transmises, par l'entremise d'images et d'objets issus de la culture matérielle. Cependant, ces artefacts, considérés comme des signifiants matériels de la nation polono-lituanienne, proviennent de l'étranger. Les costumes ottomans, les tapis d'Orient et les armes persanes ont été paradoxalement utilisés par la classe politique polono-lituanienne comme des outils leur permettant de réclamer leurs racines européennes et classiques. Mettant l'accent sur les pratiques de mobilité, sur l'adaptation ainsi que la confusion culturelle, l'objectif des cinq chapitres de cette étude est de démontrer la contingence et la nature instable des appellations nationales et ethniques en ce qui a trait à l'auto-identification et aux artefacts qui les a reliés. La Pologne-Lituanie est un laboratoire méthodologique utile dans ce contexte, car elle amène à un questionnement des théories qui promeuvent l'idée de nations avec des cultures distinctes. Au contraire, le cas de la Pologne-Lituanie suggère que le discours sur le caractère distinctif de la culture est le résultat d'une confusion culturelle.

La première partie de ce projet porte sur les représentations et les perceptions flottantes des costumes polono-lituaniens (et donc des coutumes), dans la République des Deux Nations et

à l'étranger. Elle explore les processus de transculturation : le contact avec les autres traditions que change la perception qu'un peuple a de son propre milieu culturel. Le chapitre 1 traite de l'intégration des costumes de style ottoman dans l'autoreprésentation polonaise-lituanienne. De plus, il discute de la cooptation de ces costumes dans l'ensemble du pays, en cherchant à savoir de quelle façon ceux-ci ont contribué à l'auto-identification de la noblesse hétérogène de la République, et comment celle-ci se perçoit comme une nation unie située à la périphérie de l'Europe de l'est. Les chapitres 2 et 3 traitent de l'ambivalence culturelle du costume polono-lituanien à Rome, à Paris et à Amsterdam, à savoir s'il est perçu davantage comme étant ottomanesque ou européen. Ces trois chapitres contribuent à revoir les relations entre ce qui est natif et ce qui est étranger, entre ce qui est central et périphérique, entre l'Europe et ses autres, en démontrant que ces catégories ne sont pas des pôles opposés, mais qu'elles se nourrissent plutôt les unes des autres pour se définir et se justifier.

La seconde partie s'éloigne des malentendus culturels en lien avec le costume pour aborder la confusion culturelle créée par les matières premières et l'imagerie naturaliste. Dans les chapitres 4 et 5, cette problématique est bien représentée par l'ambre baltique et par le traité illustré de Michał Boym's *Flora sinensis* (1656) : deux ressources culturelles que les commentateurs polonais qualifient de « polonais ». De plus, cette étude démontre que ces phénomènes échappent aux catégorisations faciles au début de la période moderne, notamment à cause de leur portabilité. On préconise donc un récit plus horizontal, qui traite avec une égale préoccupation des divers endroits où l'ambre baltique et la *Flora sinensis* de Boym ont été interprétés et réemployés. Soulignant leur transformation incessante et la variation des idées à propos de ces matériaux, la partie 2 met donc en avant la création en cours (et la recréation) de

formes culturelles qui ne peuvent pas être simplement assignées à une seule région culturelle et à ses traditions historiques.

Les buts de cette thèse sont donc à la fois empiriques et méthodologiques ; on y présente plusieurs études de cas qui démontrent comment la culture matérielle polono-lituanienne était le produit de traditions et de coutumes croisées, tout en utilisant cette région hétérogène comme un site critique pour prouver que les signifiants matériels de la spécificité d'une nation et d'une ethnie apparaissaient souvent dans le mélange des cultures. Cette thèse permet de mettre ce désordre culturel au premier plan.

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Introduction

Globalising the Periphery: Poland-Lithuania and Cultural Entanglement, 1587–1668

> Yet what if identity is conceived not as [a] boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject? The story or stories of interactions must then be more complex, less linear and teleological.
>
> James Clifford, *Routes*.[1]

In the spring of 1601, Sefer Muratowicz, an Armenian merchant residing at Lviv in Red Ruthenia set off on a trip to the Persian city of Kashan. The purpose of this voyage was to commission carpets and other Persian luxury wares for King Sigismund III Vasa of Poland-Lithuania (r. 1587–1632).[2] Neither the king's instruction letter, nor Muratowicz's passport have survived. Fortuitously, however, a copy of the merchant's hand-written travel relation, which he presumably presented to Sigismund upon return from Persia, was eventually published in 1743, and again in 1777.[3] In it, Muratowicz explains that in Kashan he ordered 'for His Majesty the King […] rugs woven in silk and gold, as well as a tent, [and] Damascus steel scimitars.'[4] Additional information comes from an expense report submitted on 12 September 1602 to the

[1] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 1 edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 344.

[2] Tadeusz Mańkowski, 'Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601', *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 12 (1951): 194. Based on the calculation of travel distances between Mangalia and Kashan, as well as Isfahan and Cracow, Mańkowski convincingly argues that regardless of the date of 1602 as evoked by the printed edition of Muratowicz's itinerary (1772), the actual departure took place in the spring of 1601.

[3] Michael Połczyński, 'The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz: 1601–1602 Private Royal Envoy of Sigismund III Vasa to Shah 'Abbas I', *Turkish Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (2014): 66.

[4] Sefer Muratowicz, *Relacya Sefera Muratowicza obywatela warszawskiego od Zygmunta III krola polskiego dla sprawowania rzeczy wysłanego do Persyi w roku 1602* (Warsaw: J. F. Minasowicz, 1777), 9. For analysis and English translation, see Połczyński, 'The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz'.

royal courtier Jerzy Młodecki.[5] From this document, we see exactly which items Muratowicz acquired for Sigismund during his stay in Kashan, and at what prices:

two tents which cost	Thal. 360
two pair of rugs, 40 thalers each	Thal. 160
two rugs, 41 thalers each	Thal. 82
for the execution of his Majesty's arms [on rugs]	Thal. 5
two rugs, 39 thalers each	Thal. 78
two pair of garments made of camel hair	Thal. 145
a similar smaller dress	Thal. 4
two scarves interwoven with gold	Thal. 26
musk	Thal. 8
two Damascus steel bells	Thal. 8
Total	Thal. 876

The expense report makes it clear that Sigismund was interested in Persian wares, and was ready to spend vast sums to secure the best commissions.[6] At the time, the king had already owned an enviable collection of Middle Eastern artefacts, especially rugs, having likely inherited the carpets commissioned by his uncle King Sigismund II Jagiellon (r. 1548–1572),[7] and the Persian textiles ordered by his direct predecessor, King Stephen Báthory (1576–1586).[8] Several

[5] This was either an expense report or an invoice. Jerzy Młodecki, expense report, 12 September 1602, the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (AGAD), Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego Oddz. III, Sygn. 5, pp. 327-328v. For English translation, see Tadeusz Mańkowski, 'Note on the Cost of Kashan Carpets at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century', *Bulletin of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology* 4, no. 3 (1936): 152.

[6] Around 1600, 1 thaler was equivalent of 40 *grosz*, and an unskilled labourer in Cracow would earn 3–5 *grosz* a day in 1601. Thus, Muratowicz's Kashan order was worth roughly 25 years of an unskilled labourer's daily wages (provided they worked seven days a week). See Józef Andrzej Szwagrzyk, *Pieniądz na ziemiach polskich X-XX w.*, 2nd ed. (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), 136 and 142.

[7] These rugs were brought to Cracow by Wawrzyniec Spytko Jordan from his trip to Turkey in 1553. Mańkowski, 'Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601', 190.

[8] These textiles were ordered through the mediation of Armenian merchants in 1585. Ibid.

servants were hired for the care and preservation of these carpets.[9] Sigismund was therefore by no means a newcomer to carpet collecting. Indeed, the collecting and display of Middle Eastern wares were significant cultural practices at the Polish-Lithuanian court.

The king likely chose Muratowicz to embark on a long trip to Persia due to the merchant's linguistic command of both Turkish and Persian, as well as his connections to the large Armenian diaspora and his status as the subject of the Ottoman sultan.[10] And Sigismund was satisfied with Muratowicz's efforts. In gratitude, he appointed him a royal purveyor ('servitor ac negotiator') of Middle Eastern wares on 26 October 1602.[11] Muratowicz was henceforth exempt from customs duties on merchandise from the Ottoman and Safavid empires ('generis merces ex Turcia, Persia'), provided the king obtained pre-emption rights to secure the best wares for himself. Moreover, Muratowicz was taken away from guild jurisdiction and became subject only to the authority of the king. In subsequent archival documents from Lviv, Muratowicz appears as a citizen and merchant of Warsaw proudly calling himself *servitor regius*

[9] A document from 29 October 1602 lists a payment to carpenters who were most likely responsible for producing looms for carpet makers, referred to as *awtarze* in old Polish. The suitable passage reads: '29 October. [Money owed to] carpenters… who carved lumber for the building wherein the servants [work], with the aim to assemble a workshop for carpet makers [*awtarze*], wherein [they] are to make carpets and tapestries on the demand of HM The King.' In original: 'Die 29 Octobris. Cieślom… którzy drzewo ciosali do gmachu kędy służba, na warsztat awtarzom, kędy mają robić kobierce i opony za rozkazaniem Króla JMci.' Adam Chmiel (ed.), *Wawel: materyały archiwalne do budowy zamku*, vol. 2 (Cracow: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1913), 467. Further confirmation for the existence of carpet workshops at the Wawel Castle in the wing for servants comes from a document from 4 November: '[Money owed to] carpenters … who in the building wherein the servants [work] touched up the workshop for *awtarze* [made with the aim] to weave carpets…' In original: 'Die 4 Novembris. Cieślom… którzy w gmachu kędy służba warsztatu awtarzom dorabiali dla robienia kobierców…' Ibid. Moreover, we know that there were specifically trained retainers at the Wawel Castle responsible for the preservation of oriental carpets. This task was in the hands of two women, Żbikowska and Milewska, whose function at court was described as *lotrix* in Latin. Archiwum Główne Warsaw, Dział rachunków królewskich. Vol. 301, pp. 390-1. See also, Władysław Tomkiewicz, *Z dziejów polskiego mecenatu artystycznego w wieku XVII* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1952), 22.

[10] Eleonora Nadel-Golobič, 'Armenians and Jews in Medieval Lvov: Their Role in Oriental Trade 1400-1600', *Cahiers Du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 20, no. 3/4 (1979): 347–51; Połczyński, 'The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz', 60.

[11] The Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine, City of Lviv (TsDIAL), Acta Iudicii Armenorum Leopol. ab Anno 1611 ad 1615, vol. 8, in folio p. 1018. For transcription, see, Sadok Barącz, *Żywoty sławnych Ormian w Polsce* (Lwów: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1856), 236 note 2.

(royal servant).[12] The spectacular turn that Muratowicz's career took was possible because the royal court in Warsaw avidly consumed Middle Eastern goods.[13] In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth such collections marked this newly forged nation (1569) as a cultural milieu located at a crossroads between east and west.

Sigismund's penchant for Persian carpets is one instance of the apparent cultural liminality in Poland-Lithuania. A quick look at the silk rug at the Munich Residenz Museum (Fig. 0.1), and at a similar carpet at the Nymphenburg Palace, also in Munich (Fig. 0.2),[14] suggests that these objects—both most certainly commissioned by Muratowicz in Kashan[15]—were not just foreign luxury items. Unlike most kilims, these include the coat of arms of a European monarch woven into the centre of their design. This is the Polish White Eagle with the Vasa sheaf placed in the escutcheon on the bird's breast, the heraldic representation of Sigismund's royal lineage from the indigenous Jagiellonian dynasty. Apart from the carpets in Munich, there are two other known kilims with Sigismund's arms: a half-kilim in Washington D.C. (Fig. 0.3),[16] and a carpet in the Quirinal Palace in Rome (Fig. 0.4).[17] That these Vasa kilims

[12] TsDIAL, Acta Iudicii Armenorum Leopol. ab Anno 1607 ad 1610, vol. 7, in folio p. 679. For transcription, see Ibid., 237 note 3.

[13] The Vasa court was not unusual in this respect, as carpets were appreciated at other European courts of the day. See Marco Spallanzani, *Oriental Rugs in Renaissance Florence*, trans. Anna Moore Valeri (Florence: S.P.E.S., 2007); Onno Ydema, *Carpets and Their Datings in Netherlandish Paintings, 1540-1700* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1991).

[14] Chris Dercon and et al., eds., *The Future of Tradition - The Tradition of Future: 100 Years after the Exhibition 'Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art' in Munich : 100 Jahre nach der Ausstellung 'Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst' in München* (Munich: Prestel, 2010), 118, cat. 24.

[15] Tadeusz Mańkowski has cogently demonstrated that five carpets kept in the collection of the Residenz in Munich can be plausibly traced back to the 1601 journey of Muratowicz. Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Orient w polskiej kulturze artystycznej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959), 173. Thanks to the kindness of Dr. Christian Quaeitzsch from the Residenz Museum in Munich, I have learnt that there are altogether 13 knotted carpets and textiles (BSV.WA0315-318, BSV.WB0022-30) in the collection of the Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung. They belong the type of so-called "Polish carpets", and owing to this identification, they are believed to have belonged Anna Catherina's dowry (based on formal analysis, rather than archival evidence). See Herbert Brunner and Albrecht Miller, *Die Kunstschätze der Münchner Residenz* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1977), 22–23, 259–60.

[16] Carol Bier and Textile Museum, Washington DC, eds., *Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th-19th Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987), 230, cat. 49.

are now abroad implies their function as gifts to other courts.[18] These exogenous objects were clearly treated as fitting representations of the House of Vasa and its realm.

The evidence suggests that they were appreciated as such. Jean Le Laboureur, who came to Warsaw in 1646 with Marie-Louise Gonzaga de Nevers, future bride of King Ladislaus IV Vasa (r. 1632–1648), wrote a diary of his lady's journey to the Polish-Lithuanian capital, in which he praised the collection of carpets in Warsaw Castle. For him, 'the royal carpets [were] the most beautiful not only in Europe but also in Asia.'[19] This is high praise from a worldly Parisian courtier. The high quality of the Warsaw carpets prompted Le Laboureur to situate them between a familiar Europe and an exotic Asia. Indeed, it was the perceived exoticism of the Polish-Lithuanian court that was particularly striking to the Frenchman. Describing Prince Janusz Radziwiłł (1612–1655), one of the Commonwealth grandees who was present at the wedding of Marie-Louise and Ladislaus, Le Laboureur paints a picture of the nobility's penchant for eastern material culture. He speaks of 'the handkerchiefs of the Polish nobles, which are for the most part made of cotton with Turkish embroidery of gold, silver and silk'. Radziwiłł is said to offer one such handkerchief to Marie-Louise's superintendent ('Ambassadrice extraordinaire et Sur-Intendante') Madame la Mareschalle de Guébriant. The handkerchief was 'made by the own hand of his wife, daughter of the Prince Palatine of the Wallachians, on which she had woven their names and their arms', and Radziwiłł 'went to fetch it in his room, and sent it by a

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[17] Maria Taboga, '1601: Un tappeto ti Sigismondo III Wasa al Quirinale', *Il Quirinale*, no. 6 (January 2008): 1–12.

[18] There is no documentation for the Washington and Quirinal rugs, but the Munich carpets were most likely part of the dowry of Anne Catherine Constance Vasa, daughter of Sigismund III, who married Philipp Wilhelm Wittelsbach of Neuburg in 1642. See Tadeusz Mańkowski, 'Influence of Islamic Art in Poland', *Ars Islamica* 2, no. 1 (1935): 189.

[19] '(…) le tapisseries Royalles ne sont pas seulement de plus belles de l'Europe, mais de l'Asie.' In Jean Le Laboureur, *Histoire du voyage de la Reine de Pologne*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1648), 5.

little dwarf from Tartary, together with a Persian carpet beautifully adorned with gold'.[20] Once again, eastern textiles function as a metonym of Polish-Lithuanian cultural particularism; here they are given to a foreign official as tokens of 'Polishness'.

This 'Polonisation' of Middle Eastern wares seems to have been a prevalent cultural practice. Many documents confirm that the Polish-Lithuanian nobility saw carpets as intimately connected with their ways of life. In fact, the indigenization of eastern carpets lead to the establishment of local looms.[21] The first recorded carpet workshop in Poland-Lithuania dates to 24 May 1585 when King Stephen Báthory granted an exclusive privilege to the artisan Murat Jakubowicz for the manufacturing of carpets 'in the Turkish manner' (*more turcico*).[22] By the seventeenth century, imported and domestically produced 'Turkish' and 'Persian' rugs furnished many noble homes, even the humbler ones. As a typical example, the petty noble Madaliński family of Niżniów (Ukrainian, Nyzhniv) owned 'one grand carpet, two smaller ones, three small, two simple Turkish carpets, and a brindled kilim for upholstery'.[23] Similarly, from the court suit brought by a petty nobleman Jan Wyganowski against Izajasz Bałaban (possibly a local Jew), we learn that Bałaban was sued for the raid on Wyganowski's manor in Obelnica. The damages

[20] 'Il le fit tres-galamment; car estant tombé sur le discours des mouchoirs des Seigneurs Polonois, qui sont pour la pluspart de toile de coton en broderie de Turquie, d'or & d'argent trait, & de soye: il dit qu'il luy en vouloit donner un, fait de la propre main de sa femme fille du Prince Palatin des Valaques, ou elle avoit tissu leurs noms & leurs armes. Il l'alla chercher dans sa chambre, & l'envoya par un petit nain de Tartarie sur un tapis de Perse fort beau rehaussé d'or, qu'il l'obligea de prendre aussi.' Ibid., 3:9–10.

[21] Mańkowski, 'Influence of Islamic Art in Poland', 98.

[22] Mańkowski, *Orient*, 92, 186.

[23] See an inventory from 1626 listing the possessions of the Madaliński family. Castr. Halic., vol. 122, f. 327, in Ibid., 153 note 139.

included twelve Persian and six Turkish carpets.[24] Many other inventories and documents confirm this Polish-Lithuanian penchant for rugs.[25]

Wealthier members of the noble class followed the king in commissioning their arms to be woven into carpets, marking these foreign goods with their noble status. One such artefact is *a rug at Wawel Castle* (Fig. 0.5)*, which contains the family coat of arms of Lord Grand-Marshal of Lithuania,* Krzysztof Wiesiołowski (d. 1637). A document from 1645 has led to speculation that the rug was produced in Poland-Lithuania. This is the last will of Wiesiołowski's widow (d. 1645) Aleksandra Marianna, which lists 'five grand carpets in the Persian manner of our domestic manufacture' (*swojej domowej roboty*), and 'twelve carpets in the Turkish manner of domestic production' (*na kształt dywańskich domowej roboty*).[26] Although the document specifies that the Wiesiołowski carpets were made 'in the Turkish manner', they were simultaneously 'of our domestic manufacture'. The rhetoric of this document marks a hazy line between the carpets made in Poland-Lithuania and those woven in the Middle East. Ottoman-style carpets were described as both foreign and local. Daily contact with such carpets, particularly seeing, touching and contact with the body, habituated the nobility to material forms of self-identification that were both local and global, domesticated and exogenous. Although initially of Persian and Ottoman provenance, carpets were reinvented as goods that were closely

[24] Castr. Halic., vol. 118, f. 429 pp. See also Ibid., 152 note 139.

[25] See, for example, Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Sztuka Islamu w Polsce w XVII i XVIII wieku* (Cracow: Nakł. Polskiej Akademji Umiejętności, 1935), 3–31.

[26] 'Podkanclerzemu W. K. L.—swojej domowej roboty naznaczam kobiercy wielkich 5 różnej maści na kształt perskich; podkanclerzemu W. K. L. … kobierców na kształt dywańskich domowej roboty 12.' Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, Warsaw, Teki Glinki, Teka 66, p. 19.

associated with Poland-Lithuania, thereby forming a domestic patrimony that overlooked these artefacts' Middle Eastern derivation.[27]

Taking the issues raised by the particular cultural dynamics of carpets in Poland-Lithuania as a starting point, this dissertation will foreground the cultural liminality of the Commonwealth during the reign of the Vasa Dynasty (1587-1668). Located at a point of juncture between central Europe, the lands of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania was a trans-cultural contact zone where various people and artefacts crossed paths regularly. My study will demonstrate that despite the omission of Poland-Lithuania from the traditional art-historical canon, its visual and material culture has much to teach us about the stakes and dynamics of a global history of art, which is currently one of the discipline's most urgent challenges.

Aims and Approach

In its trans-cultural approach, this thesis allies itself with the ongoing 'global turn' in historical and art-historical enterprise, which dispenses with the tendency to treat the nation-state as the most fundamental unit of investigation. Instead, both historians and art historians have recently paid increased attention to cultural entanglements, networks and mobilities, challenging the conception of local, regional and national histories as either inherent or self-contained.[28] The aims of this thesis are thus both empirical and methodological. Each of the case studies in the

[27] Although elsewhere in Europe carpets were also domesticated into signalling localness, never were they thought to have been produced locally, like in the Commonwealth. See Anne Gerritsen, 'Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands', *Journal of Design History* early access (10 August 2016): 5–6, doi:10.1093/jdh/epw021.

[28] Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); David Carrier, *A World Art History and Its Objects* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).

following chapters demonstrates how Polish-Lithuanian material culture was the product of intersecting traditions and customs and explores how such heterogeneous ensembles are critical sites for thinking through the dialectic of the local and the global.

To illustrate how I connect these strands, let me return to the carpets commissioned by Sigismund III. In 1642, Sigismund's daughter (and Ladislaus's half-sister) Anne Catherine Constance Vasa was being married to Philipp Wilhelm Wittelsbach of Neuburg. As part of her dowry, the princess received many rugs from the royal collection, including Sigismund's kilims with Vasa arms (Fig. 0.1 and 0.2).[29] The carpets, which Sigismund commissioned with so much care, were sent to Bavaria, where they were meant to proclaim Anne Catherine Constance's royal lineage and Polish-Lithuanian heritage. But centuries passed and this connection was lost. The subsequent archival source for these carpets is from the 1874 inventory of the Munich Residence.[30] Symptomatically, in this document the Munich carpets are catalogued as 'türkisch' (Turkish), even though they are today considered unmistakably Persian.[31] Not only was knowledge of their actual provenance lost, but so was their origin as gifts from the Polish-Lithuanian court. The nineteenth-century cataloguer did not even note that two of these carpets had dynastic arms of a Polish-Lithuanian monarch.

[29] Mańkowski, 'Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601', 189.

[30] In the 1680s the Wittelsbach-Neuburg branch came to rule in the Palatinate and the new electors moved to Mannheim. In 1777 the Palatine elector Carl Theodor became—according to older family contracts—Elector of the Palatinate as well as Bavaria and transferred his residence to Munich. Since 1799, his successor, Max-Joseph of Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld, united the properties of the Palatine and Bavarian branches in Munich in order to rescue them from the progressing French armies of Napoleon. It was probably in this period that the Vasa carpets came from Mannheim to Munich (e-mail from Dr. Christian Quaeitzsch; 31 July 2013). See Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik Robert Martin, *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910*, vol. 2 (London: Alexandria Press, 1985), plate 60. I would like to thank Christian Quaeitzsch for his advice on carpet collections at the Bayerischen Schlösserverwaltung.

[31] Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen, Inventar der Königl. Residenz München: Gelbe Zimmer 16, 1874, Gelbe Zimmer 57.01, folio 16, nos. 29–31.

This misapprehension occurred despite the status of the partitioned Polish-Lithuanian lands (then divided between Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary) as a gold mine for carpet collectors. At the turn of the twentieth century, when rug collecting became popular among wealthy connoisseurs, there seem to have been more flat-woven carpets in the former Polish-Lithuanian territories than in any other European country, and perhaps—as some scholars argue—even more than in Persia itself.[32] This, of course, was the remnant of the past when Polish-Lithuanian nobility were commissioning large quantities of high-quality Persian textiles. It was during the late nineteenth century that Poles began selling off their carpets to western European and American collectors, often unaware of their true market value. In fact, today not many of them remain in Poland.[33]

In testimony to the abundance of carpets from this region, a specific type of rug received the name 'Polish carpets' (*tapis polonais*) at the Paris exhibition in 1878, where objects belonging to the aristocrat Władysław Czartoryski (1828–1894) were exhibited to promote Polish culture. This misattribution derived from a temporary application of the family coat of arms into the central part of design of the carpets on display in Paris. This embellishment gave visitors the impression that the Czartoryski rugs were made in Poland.[34]

Early doubts about this attribution were expressed thirteen years later at the carpet exhibition of 1891 in Vienna by the preeminent art historian Alois Riegl. Riegl noted similarities

[32] Mańkowski, *Orient*, 175-6, 180.

[33] Mańkowski, *Orient*, 154.

[34] Paulina Banas, 'Persische Kunst und Polnische Identität', in *Sehnsucht Persien: Austausch und Rezeption in der Kunst Persiens und Europas im 17. Jahrhundert & Gegenwartskunst aus Teheran*, ed. Axel Langer (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2013), 123.

with objects from the Kashan and Isfahan imperial workshops.[35] The whole 'Polish' theory was completely dismissed in 1902 by another titan of German-language art history, Wilhelm Bode, then director of Berlin's Gemäldegalerie and later the creator and first curator of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum. Bode brought together conclusive stylistic and technological evidence to prove that these carpets were of Persian origin.[36] As carpet expert Friedrich Sarre put it in the catalogue accompanying the 1910 Munich grand exhibition 'Masterpieces of Mohammedan Art': 'the fable of the Polish origin of the silk Persian rugs woven with silver and golden threads was many years ago destroyed by Wilhelm Bode'.[37] Even so, to this day the type of seventeenth-century flat-woven carpets from Kashan and Isfahan are still referred to as 'so-called Polish carpets' by carpet historians, curators and dealers, evoking the erroneous 1878 attribution. As many of the case studies in this dissertation demonstrate, this type of confusion about national and cultural origins is typical of the discourse about art and artefacts associated with Poland-Lithuania. The cultural liminality of the Commonwealth, especially its place between east and west, has led to numerous misattributions of this sort, marking Polish-Lithuanian material and visual culture as susceptible to epistemological instability.

Indeed, one might argue that the terminological corrective 'so-called Polish carpets', which was applied at the heyday of European nationalism, went too far. While it rightly debunked the idea that the *tapis polonais* were produced in Poland-Lithuania, it simultaneously entrenched a limiting, purist notion of their origin in Persia. There was little interest in the fact

[35] Alois Riegl, *Altorientalische Teppiche* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1891); Dercon and et al., *The Future of Tradition - the Tradition of Future: 100 Years after the Exhibition 'Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art' in Munich : 100 Jahre nach der Ausstellung 'Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst' in München*, 119.

[36] Wilhelm Bode, *Vorderasiatische Knüpfteppiche Aus Älterer Zeit* (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann, 1902), 49–60.

[37] 'Schon seit langem ist von Wilhelm Bode die Fabel von der polnischen Entstehung der seidenem, mit reicher Einwirkung von Silber- und Goldfäden Perserteppiche zerstört worden.' In Friedrich Sarre, 'Die Teppiche', in *Meisterwerken Muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910: Text*, ed. Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik Robert Martin, vol. 2 (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1912), n.p.

that many of these carpets arrived in western European and North American collections by way of Poland (and other lands formerly forming the Commonwealth). Neither was it noted that many of them had been commissioned by Poles, Ruthenians and Lithuanians. The label of 'so-called Polish carpets' thus discouraged examination of these objects' fuller history. Moreover, having attributed the best-quality *tapis polonais* to Persia, art historians had no interest in the rugs that were actually manufactured on Polish-Lithuanian looms. This remains an unexplored topic.

In asserting the Persian production of 'so-called Polish carpets' these early art historians assumed that the origins of an art form could only be linked to a single nation, people or geographical place.[38] *Tapis polonais* challenge such outdated assumptions. First, their historically high occurrence in Poland-Lithuania implies that the imperial workshops in Kashan and Isfahan were not self-sufficient, but operated partly thanks to commissions from abroad. Second, these commissions changed the appearance of some rugs: certainly, one never sees coats of arms on carpets made for the Persian market. Third, the success and proliferation of the *tapis polonais* outside Persia shows that their development was influenced by external factors. In spite of this, the important role of Polish-Lithuanian nobility in the history of these types of carpets has been forgotten. As this dissertation will demonstrate, the impact of the cultural traditions of in-between places like Poland-Lithuania is often overlooked in favour of narratives of cultural transfer as an interaction between two readily identifiable centres. This impoverishes our understanding of the social lives of things like *tapis polonais*. Such artefacts were created in relation to not just one but several regions, and because of their portability were consumed in still more places than their current location might imply. Commissions from Poland-Lithuania

[38] Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1–13.

not only influenced the design of these objects, but also secured their relatively high survival rate, as these carpets had been safely preserved in Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarusian households before they made their way into North American and western European collections.

The concept of origin, traditionally tied to a single geographical location, is currently being interrogated by art historians.[39] Building on this critique, my dissertation makes use of Poland-Lithuania's specific location as a crossroads between regions that have often been defined in terms of separate and distinctive 'cultures' (Latin Christendom, Orthodox Christianity and Islam). The various case studies make a particularly evocative argument against cultural essentialism. The working premise of this investigation is that cultural ensembles have no pure origins, but are the products of complex interactions between diverse regions, and thus are always *already* entangled.[40] Polish-Lithuanian material culture offers a fruitful avenue for renewed scholarship in the field of transcultural studies, as the country's geographical position made it susceptible to ongoing transformation triggered by stimuli from many different places. The complex pathways and genealogies of Polish-Lithuanian artefacts are thus of interest not only to historians of the Commonwealth, but also to art history and cultural studies more broadly, as a corrective to faulty theories and assumptions about cultural determinism and geographical commensurability.

[39] See, for example, Alessandra Russo, *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain*, trans. Susan Emanuel, Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014); Eva R. Hoffman, 'Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century', *Art History* 24, no. 1 (February 2001): 17–50.

[40] See Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Third Space', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998), 211.

Literature Review: Cultural Entanglement and Poland-Lithuania

There is a growing body of scholarship that challenges the outmoded emphasis on the origins of artefacts at the expense of their mobility. Michel Espagne and Michael Werner were among the first to define cultural transfer as an ongoing process of ebb and flow whereby artworks, ideas and texts circulate across geographical contexts, undergoing transformation as they cross borders, at the same time changing the very contexts that embrace them.[41] These remarks appeared in an introduction to the edited volume on Franco-German shared history, in which Espagne and Werner make it clear that what was then (and still are) often called 'national cultures' are not autonomous and stable entities but the result of unceasing mixing and crossing between malleable cultural ensembles. Both Espagne and Werner have continued to challenge nationalist assumptions about cultural particularity and uniqueness, foregrounding the interconnectedness of cultures and the artificiality of historiographies centred on nation-states.[42] In an article co-written with Bénédicte Zimmermann, Werner called such a pluralistic approach *histoire croisée* (inter-crossed history), which has become an important term of analysis for this new mode of cultural inquiry.[43]

Another important critical term that has come to define the field of trans-cultural studies was coined by anthropologist Nicholas Thomas, who spoke of 'entangled objects' when

[41] Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, 'Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer als Forschungsgegenstand: Eine Problemskizze', in *Transferts: Les relations interculturelles dans l'espace franco-allemand, XVIIIe et XIXe siècle*, ed. Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (Paris: Editions recherche sur les civilisations, 1988), 11–34.

[42] Michel Espagne, *L'histoire de l'art comme transfert culturel: L'itinéraire d'Anton Springer* (Paris: Belin, 2009); Michel Espagne, 'Cultural Transfers in Art History', in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 97–112; Michael Werner, 'Kulturtransfer Und Histoire Croisée. Zu Einigen Methodenfragen Der Untersuchung Soziokultureller Interaktionen', in *Zwischen Kahlschlag Und Rive Gauche: Deutsch-Französische Kulturbeziehungen 1945-1960*, ed. Stephan Braese and Ruth Vogel-Klein (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015), 21–42.

[43] Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory* 45 (February 2006): 30–50.

describing colonial encounters in the South Pacific. For Thomas, 'objects are not what they were made but what they have become'.[44] Enabling a process through which both Europeans and Pacific islanders appropriated elements of each other's material cultures, objects entangled societies together through a dynamic activity that took place both between and within cultural codes, forms and practices. In this view, objects and cultural ensembles are always already entangled. Thus, the process of cross-cultural entanglement is not a one-way projection; nor does it produce artefacts that can project an account of one stable culture. A culture is never stable or fully formed, but always changing and developing in dialogue with other cultural forms and practices.

Early modernists have made important contributions to this approach. Serge Gruzinski, one of the pioneers, analysed the complex interplay of linkages between local/colonised and foreign/coloniser at work in the art of New Spain. He demonstrated that it was not simply the culture of Iberian colonisers that took over the local cultural landscape; rather the cultural practices of the indigenous Nahua elites were often tacitly incorporated into the official art and culture of the coloniser, together forming a dynamic ensemble that was continually in flux.[45] Pushing further with this issue, Sanjay Subrahmanyam's studies on pre-colonial India demonstrate that one can only grasp the history of early modern Indian states by studying their interactions with Persia, the Ottoman Empire, south-east Asia, the Iberian powers and other places.[46] According to this mode of enquiry, histories and societal trajectories combine elements

[44] Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 4.

[45] Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[46] See, for example, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Mughals and Franks*, Explorations in Connected History (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *From the Tagus to the Ganges*, Explorations in Connected History (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011).

of each other, continuously crossing paths, intersecting and becoming entangled. Subrahmanyam coined the phrase 'connected histories' to describe a methodological approach that foregrounds these pluralistic tendencies.[47]

More recently, historians of early modern art have also begun to expand their understanding of visual and material culture beyond the context of artefacts' production and consumption, looking instead for signs and patterns of transculturation.[48] Bronwen Wilson, to provide a preeminent example, has shown that sixteenth-century Venetian identities were shaped through exchanges with outsiders, and that the process of re-shaping these identities was mediated by visual imagery.[49] Cécile Fromont has examined the development of Christian material culture in the west central African kingdom of Kongo between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, revealing how local elites intertwined old and new religious visual forms, neither fully conforming to the models brought over by Portuguese missionaries, nor disregarding them completely.[50] In a similar fashion, Barbara Mundy has argued that the impact of the Aztec elites on the rebuilding of Tenochtitlan/Mexico City in the sixteenth century was comparable in scope to that of the Iberian-born artists, architects and administrators.[51] Also undoing artificial boundaries between indigenous and foreign cultural forms, Stephanie Leitch has demonstrated that early sixteenth-century German representations of Amerindians, Africans and Asians had an impact on how German educated elites saw their own 'barbaric' past, which

[47] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia', *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735–62.

[48] On transculturation, see Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 97–103.

[49] Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

[50] Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[51] Barbara E. Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

in turn influenced ideas of modern 'Germanness'.[52] Such trans-cultural approaches to the study of early modern art have gained pace in recent years, of which the most visible sign is the growing number of symposia, conference panels and edited volumes devoted to this avenue of research.[53]

Here it is important to emphasize that in many ways, the historiography of Polish art has been shaped by interest in trans-cultural narratives decades before the global turn gained momentum in Anglo-American art history. Thus it is admittedly somewhat misleading to claim to 'introduce' Poland-Lithuania to this discourse, for already in the 1930s Polish scholars were considering the effects of Poland-Lithuania's proximity to the Ottoman Empire, and its consequences for local self-perceptions.[54]

The historian usually credited with re-orienting the focus of Polish cultural history from Italy, Germany and France to the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy is Tadeusz Mańkowski. In an 1935 English-language article, Mańkowski synthesised his research on the reception of Ottoman and Persian textiles and metalwork in Poland-Lithuania, asserting that the Commonwealth 'became the territory where East and West met, where their cultural and artistic influences came into touch and intermingled very often creating new, mediate forms of an interesting and peculiar kind'.[55] In his oft-cited monograph 'The Genealogy of Sarmatism' (*Genealogia sarmatyzmu*, 1946), Mańkowski took an even stronger stance and argued that Polish-Lithuanian nobility

[52] Stephanie Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[53] Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, eds., *Collecting across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, The Early Modern Americas (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin, 'Introduction: Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World', *Art History* 38, no. 4 (September 2015): 598–805. See also the SSHRC-sponsored project 'Making Worlds: Art, Materiality and Early Modern Globalisation', http://www.makingworlds.net.

[54] Zdzisław Jr Żygulski, 'Wspomnienie o Tadeuszu Mańkowskim', *Mój Lwów*, 1996, http://www.lwow.home.pl/zygulski.html.

[55] Mańkowski, 'Influence of Islamic Art in Poland', 93.

traced their origin from the ancient Sarmatians who were an Iranian people. It is through this 'eastern' origin that Mańkowski explained Polish-Lithuanian predilection for Ottomanesque costume, textiles and metalwork.[56] Mańkowski expanded on this theory in two subsequent monographs, one devoted entirely to textiles,[57] and another to the influence of what he calls 'the Orient' on Polish-Lithuanian art and culture.[58]

Mańkowski's general assumption about the eastward orientation of Polish-Lithuanian costume, textiles and metalwork became a paradigm of research for historians of art and material culture in Poland. Historians of costume spoke of the 'Orientalisation' of Polish-Lithuanian dress in the sixteenth century,[59] and art historians continued to explore the high demand for eastern-looking textiles in Poland-Lithuania.[60] Several monographs and edited volumes have been devoted to the expression of Polish-Lithuanian identities in costume; these volumes suggest that the Commonwealth's nobility saw no contradiction in priding themselves in Christian virtue while wearing costume that was Ottoman and hence Muslim in provenance.[61]

Most of the scholarship on Polish-Lithuanian visual and material culture has been

[56] Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Genealogia sarmatyzmu* (Warszawa: Tow. Wydawnicze 'Łuk', 1947).

[57] Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Polskie tkaniny i hafty XVI-XVIII wieku* (Wrocław: Zakład im. Ossolińskich, 1954).

[58] Mańkowski, *Orient*.

[59] Maria Gutkowska-Rychlewska, *Historia ubiorów* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1968), 375–422; Przemysław Mrozowski, 'Orientalizacja stroju szlacheckiego w Polsce na przełomie XVI i XVII w.', in *Orient i orientalizm w sztuce*, ed. Elżbieta R. Karwowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1986), 243–61; Beata Biedrońska-Słota, *Polski ubiór narodowy zwany kontuszowym: dzieje i przemiany opracowane na podstawie zachowanych ubiorów zabytkowych i ich części oraz w świetle źródeł ikonograficznych i literackich* (Cracow: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2005); Irena Turnau, *Ubiór narodowy w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Semper, 1991); Tadeusz Chrzanowski, 'Orient i orientalizm w kulturze staropolskiej', in *Orient i orientalizm w sztuce*, ed. Elżbieta Karwowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1986), 43–69.

[60] Beata Biedrońska-Słota, 'Kobierce z polskich manufaktur (Próba podsumowania)', in *Tkaniny artystyczne z wieków XVIII I XIX*, ed. Beata Biedrońska-Słota (Cracow: Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, 1997), 151–63; *Tkanina turecka XVI-XIX w. ze zbiorów polskich*, Exh. Cat. (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1983).

[61] Stanisław Wiliński, *U źródeł portretu staropolskiego* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1958); Tadeusz Dobrowolski, 'Cztery style portretu 'sarmackiego'', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* 45 (1962): 83–101; Tadeusz Chrzanowski, *Portret staropolski* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1995).

published in Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian, but more recently there has been a growing number of publications in English and German. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann must be credited with making the field accessible to an English-speaking readership. In 1995, Kaufmann published *Court, Cloister and City*, [62] the first major study of the art of this part of the world since Jan Białostocki's *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe* (1976).[63] While Białostocki's monograph looked for 'vernacular' elements of art in Poland, Kaufmann foregrounded its trans-cultural make-up. Kaufmann revisited Polish-Lithuanian art and culture in another important book *Toward the Geography of Art* (2004), once more exploring the syncretic character of this milieu.[64] In so doing, he engaged with the argument offered by Polish historians that by self-fashioning as Sarmatians and wearing Ottomanesque costume, Polish-Lithuanian nobility effectively created a shared identity for the various nations of the Commonwealth. This was a vision of nativeness composed of material forms that originated abroad.

By taking on Polish-Lithuanian art, Kaufmann paved the way for art historians based outside Poland. Paulina Banas, for example, has recently discussed how imported artefacts from Persia became part of every-day experience in the Commonwealth.[65] Aleksandra Koutny-Jones has critiqued frequent applications of the idea of 'Orientalisation' to Polish-Lithuanian culture, pointing to differences between modern Orientalism and cultural exchange between the Commonwealth and the Ottoman empire in the early modern era.[66] In her analysis, costume

[62] Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[63] Jan Białostocki, *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe: Hungary, Bohemia, Poland* (London: Phaidon, 1976).

[64] Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, 144–53.

[65] Banas, 'Persische Kunst und polnische Identität'.

[66] Aleksandra Koutny-Jones, 'Echoes of the East: Glimpses of the Orient in British and Polish-Lithuanian Portraiture of the Eighteenth Century', in *Britain and Poland-Lithuania: Contact and Comparison from the Middle Ages to 1795*, ed. Richard Unger (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 401–419.

acted as a bridge between the cultures of Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire. In this vein, Adam Jasienski has suggested the term 'Ottomanisation' to distinguish the discussion of Polish-Lithuanian costume from the later discourse of Orientalism, with its obvious Eurocentric overtones.[67]

Other art historians have discussed the Commonwealth as a cultural borderland, calling for a pluralistic approach in the study of Polish-Lithuanian material production. Carolyn Guile, for example, has resisted the convention of either connecting Polish-Lithuanian architecture to canonical exempla of western Europe, or—conversely—of marking its allegedly indigenous, original features, both of which are still predominant methods of analysis in Poland. Instead, Guile discusses Polish-Lithuanian architecture as born (and continuously re-born) of multiple intellectual and material cultures and customs: German, Italian, Armenian, Wallachian, Ruthenian and others.[68] Andrzej Piotrowski has similarly argued that the Reformation-era architecture in Lesser Poland and Ruthenia (in the south east) explored relationships between different peoples within the Commonwealth and their faiths, developing an architectural ornamental idiom that was syncretic in style and dialogic in its rhetoric.[69] In similar manner, Olenka Pevny has canvassed the often ambivalent coexistence of Latin and Orthodox architectural forms in Ruthenia (in today's Ukraine).[70] Katie Jakobiec has surveyed the materials used for the building of the Sigismund Chapel in Cracow, the mausoleum of the last Jagiellon

[67] Adam Jasienski, 'A Savage Magnificence: Ottomanizing Fashion and the Politics of Display in Early Modern East-Central Europe', *Muqarnas* 31 (2014): 173–205.

[68] Carolyn C. Guile, 'Circulations: Early Modern Architecture in the Polish-Lithuanian Borderland', in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 79–96.

[69] Andrzej Piotrowski, *Architecture of Thought* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 93–151.

[70] Olenka Z. Pevny, 'The Encrypted Narrative of Reconstructed Cossack Baroque Forms', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 31, no. 1/4 (2010 2009): 471–519.

family members; and discovered that many of these materials originated in foreign places.[71] Another architectural study, by Marina Dmitrieva, has addressed cultural transfer in Poland-Lithuania, arguing that Italian artists who worked in the country were instrumental in shaping classical architecture for a domestic audience, effectively giving it the appearance of what would eventually be perceived as a local style.[72]

A number of exhibitions have disseminated this pluralistic picture of material and visual cultures in the Commonwealth to the general public in Poland, including shows at the country's most important museums, the National Museum in Warsaw and the National Museum in Cracow, with catalogues also available in English.[73] When international exhibitions were first put together to promote the art of the Commonwealth abroad, curators attempted to present it as following artistic developments in western Europe. This tactic met with little enthusiasm among critics and museum goers as it implied a derogatory status for the country's visual and material heritage as always lagging behind western European trends. Thus, since the 1970s organisers began to foreground the connections of Polish-Lithuanian art with Ottoman culture.[74] When the most recent exhibition was touring major North American museums in 1999–2000, the Ottomanizing character of Polish-Lithuanian art generated much interest.[75]

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[71] Katie Jakobiec, 'Polish Stone, Venetian Glass, and Red Hungarian Marble: The Materials of a Renaissance Chapel in Jagiellonian Poland', in *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, Cultural Logics, 1250-1750*, ed. Anne Dunlop, Pamela Smith, and Christy Anderson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 263–82.

[72] Marina Dmitrieva, *Italien in Sarmatien. Studien zum Kulturtransfer im östlichen Europa in der Zeit der Renaissance* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008).

[73] See, for example, *The Orient in Polish Art* (Cracow: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 1992); *Where East Meets West: Portrait of Personages of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1576-1763*, Exh. Cat. (Warsaw: National Museum, 1993).

[74] Emilia Kłoda and Adam Szeląg, '"Ribald Man with a Cranky Look". The Sarmatian Portrait as the Pop-Cultural Symbol of Baroque Art in Poland', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 15 (December 2016): 11–12.

[75] *Land of the Winged Horsemen: Art in Poland, 1572-1764* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

This dissertation builds on the scholarship of art and cultural historians who have approached Poland-Lithuania from various trans-cultural perspectives. While examining Poland-Lithuania's cultural contacts with other peoples, both in Europe and the Islamic east, this study advocates an approach that is simultaneously attentive to the Commonwealth's internal heterogeneity and external exchanges. To refer to James Clifford's oft-cited distinction, I am interested in routes rather than roots, connections rather than territories, and process rather than event.[76] Using Poland-Lithuania as a starting point, I trace the paths of transformation, which unfolded through extended contact between places and the multidirectional nature of exchange.

The study of Polish-Lithuanian material and visual culture has much to offer for our understanding of cultural entanglement. As a milieu located on the geographic periphery of Europe, Poland-Lithuania participated in western European traditions as much as it attracted Islamic and Orthodox cultural forms, also acting as a catalyst for their reception elsewhere in Europe. Yet entanglement can create cultural confusion, and as many of the following case studies demonstrate, observers were either not aware of the provenance of many foreign cultural forms (treating them instead as local), or they misidentified their place of origins. Attention to the various misunderstandings and misattributions that commonly occur in the perception of entangled cultural forms is one of the main contributions of this thesis to transcultural studies. In rethinking the periphery, it becomes clear that, time and again, engagement with Polish-Lithuanian material and visual culture generated confusion. Both in Poland-Lithuania and elsewhere in Europe, observers attempted to make Polish-Lithuanian cultural forms fit in spite of, or perhaps because of, their perceived lack of fit: these entangled objects were neither completely familiar nor totally exotic. Poland-Lithuanian culture is thus a useful methodological

[76] Clifford, *Routes*, 1–13.

laboratory precisely because of the way it suggests that the assertion of national distinctiveness is itself an attempt to manage the confusion generated by cultural entanglement.

This thesis thus employs cultural confusion as a key term of analysis. Treating Poland-Lithuania as a springboard for the study of mutual interdependencies between various material and visual traditions, it suggests that cultural entanglement provoked a great deal of misunderstanding and ambivalence. Cultural confusion offers a means of thinking about issues raised by the study of cultural domestication, shared histories and pre-modern nation-building. Foregrounding practices of mobility, adaptation and transformation, the five chapters of this study aim to demonstrate the contingent and unstable nature of national and ethnic appellations both as they pertain to self-identifications, and the material and visual forms that mediated them.

Chapter Summaries

Part One of the dissertation, 'Entangled Representations', comprises three chapters devoted to imagery and artefacts that signal the ongoing creation (and re-creation) of different ideas of Polishness, both in the Commonwealth and abroad. Poland-Lithuania—like many other early modern European sovereign states—was forged as a nexus of real and imagined commonalities between its citizens (the nobility), often by means of visual representation and material culture. These three chapters examine how this nation-building emerged in relation to material forms and visual traditions arriving from different cultural milieus. Key catalysts included Ottomanesque costume, classically-inspired maps and western European conventions of portraiture. Paying attention to these material and visual props of nation-building reveals not only how Polish-Lithuanian identity was forged as a way to manage or even mask cultural confusion and entanglement, but also how it impacted other political communities in Europe that were

fashioning their own self-representations in relation to an influx of material forms from Poland-Lithuania.

Focusing on widely-circulated representations of costume and territory, Chapter One argues that the portrayal of Poland-Lithuania as a country on the periphery of Christian Europe paradoxically created a sense of the country's long-standing connection to other European nations, while also marking the Commonwealth's distinctiveness from the rest of Christendom. In the sixteenth century, the Commonwealth's nobility began to wear Ottoman-inspired kaftans, long trousers, fur hats and eastern sabres. Partly via the movement of people and partly via the circulation of portraits, prints of parliament sessions, battles and processions, this syncretic costume spread to all corners of the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-lingual Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Cross-country dissemination of this imagery actively contributed to the growing self-identification of the Commonwealth's heterogeneous nobility as a united nation located on Europe's eastern periphery. The image of a coherent nation that was expressed through the rhetoric of sartorial uniformity also reverberated in western Europe in the form of costume books and illustrated maps, which portrayed Poland-Lithuania as a country between Europe and Asia. In concert with this liminal identification, the Commonwealth was historicised and cartographically represented as the 'European Sarmatia' of classical geographers, a liminal place located between known and unknown worlds. This chapter foregrounds misattributions and misunderstandings in the process of constructing early modern Polishness; in so doing, it makes a broader claim about the geneaology of discourses on national distinctiveness and cultural coherence, while stressing the historical fabrications of these purist categories.

Chapter Two examines various prints and paintings of Polish-Lithuanian ambassadors and their retinues to Rome and Paris which, depending on the viewer, functioned either to turn

the peripheral location of Poland-Lithuania into a strength, or to downgrade it into an object of ambivalence and derision. Some of these images depict the processions of Polish-Lithuanian envoys as testimony to the Commonwealth's military power and its status as self-professed defender of Christendom in the east, while others represent these entries as semi-exotic gatherings populated by characters who were at once European and Ottoman-looking. Exploring this confusion, this chapter assesses the preoccupation with Poland-Lithuania's peripherality, not only in Warsaw, but also in Rome and Paris. As writers and artists in these western European cities located Polish-Lithuanian society on the threshold between the familiar and the exotic, they were in fact commenting on their own societies, reiterating the centrality of the location from which they spoke. This chapter thus argues that perceptions of cultural peripherality and centrality depend on one another for their meaning and relevance. Every so-called centre defines itself by looking to its perceived margins.

Chapter Three explores portrayals of Dutch men and boys dressed in Polish-Lithuanian costume. Such portraits were mainly produced in Amsterdam and Dordrecht, cities with particularly strong mercantile connections with Poland-Lithuania. It thus seems that these peculiar entangled representations were used to tell a story about the material wealth and cultural capital of elite Dutchmen, especially those whose fortunes derived from (and thus depended on) commerce with the Commonwealth. In this case study, the distinctiveness of Polish-Lithuanian costume is repurposed: while it served as a tool of cultural cohesion in Poland-Lithuania, it was put on as a form of masquerade in the Dutch Republic. Examining these Dutch perceptions and appropriations of Polishness, especially as they were articulated *vis-à-vis* representations of other ethnicities, this chapter argues that portraits of Dutchmen in Polish-Lithuanian costume point to the ongoing mechanism of making and re-making local worldviews through engagement with

foreign materials. At the heart of this enquiry is Polish-Lithuanian costume, which serves as a nexus of transculturation as it could literally be worn on the body as a practice of cultural appropriation and adaptation. Dressing up as the other served as a means to define the self, and thus exposed mutual interdependencies.

Part Two, 'Entangled Materials and Images' shifts away from the cultural misunderstandings triggered by Polish-Lithuanian costume to assess the cultural confusion that was generated by natural resources and naturalia. Baltic amber was avidly collected, particularly by the rulers of Florence. Drawing on descriptions of amber in classical texts, early modern naturalist treatises, travel reports and Medici inventories, Chapter Four analyses Santi di Tito's painting *Creation of Amber* (1572) in Francesco I's *studiolo* as an image that entangles Florentine, Prussian and Polish histories. Most amber artefacts in early modern Medici collections originated in the Prussian cities of Danzig and Königsberg (in Poland-Lithuania). Despite this connection, Santi depicted the physical substance from which these artefacts were made as native to Italy. This chapter accordingly analyses the role that various amber artefacts played in Florentine self-representation, a process that involved denying and mis-representing the known origin of amber in the Baltic region.

Chapter Five addresses the first illustrated treatise on Chinese flora and fauna, *Flora sinensis*, by the Polish-Lithuanian Jesuit missionary to China, Michał Boym (1612–1659). Recently, several historians have deemed this volume an important contribution to the development of early European knowledge of China.[77] These scholars claim that Boym was an important figure forgotten by historians of science and visual culture, and that his authority as a

[77] Monika Miazek, *Flora sinensis Michała Boyma* (Gniezno: Collegium Europaeum Gnesnense, 2005); Edward Kajdański, *Michała Boyma opisanie świata* (Warsaw: Volumen, 2009); Hartmut Walravens, 'Flora Sinensis Revisited', *Monumenta Serica* 59 (2011): 341–52.

sinologist and originality as an illustrator call for Boym's incorporation into the canons of natural history and the history of art. I will take this argument in a different direction. In my view, the importance of Boym for the study of early modern naturalist imagery lies not in his originality, but rather in Boym's potential to unsettle the very paradigm of origin that has for so long denied the periphery an equal standing in the study of visual culture. To this end, I chart the long visual ancestry and erratic succession line of one specific image in the volume: the *sumxu*, an animal that never existed outside of representation. Though imaginary, Boym's invented animal was nonetheless treated by Europeans as an existing species until the late nineteenth century. In tracing the representations of the *Sum Xu* and its erratic journey through space and time, I foreground random connections, fault lines, and unexpected mutations instead of originary creative moments. The purpose of this chapter is thus to confront notions of pure origins and cultural coherence, while addressing the ways in which the study of visual culture may be renewed both from and for the so-called margins.

In focusing on the implications of Polish-Lithuanian culture for the recent 'global turn', my dissertation contributes to on-going debates about the shape and future of trans-cultural approaches to art-historical study. It demonstrates how cultural entanglement could generate cultural confusion. Many of the case studies explore how things were understood for what they were not, and how such misunderstandings could transform the ways in which communities saw themselves in relation to the world around them. The cultural history of the Commonwealth does not just offer a historical archive, but also a methodological laboratory. It accordingly deserves a more prominent place in art history, and this thesis attempts to bring forward the critical potential of this dynamic cultural ensemble.

Chapter 1

Periphery as Representation: Poland-Lithuania and the Europeanisation of Europe

> What is this entity 'Europe'? A land-mass, but a land-mass without natural frontiers, offering plenty of room for disagreement over what territory should be included or excluded.
>
> Peter Burke, 'Did Europe Exist Before 1700?'[78]

> Imitation compromises the narratives of national distinction by emphasising inconvenient similarities and shared heritages.
>
> Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*.[79]

A young man looks at us from a portrait painted around 1560 (Fig. 1.1). He poses in a conventional all'antica architectural setting. In a gesture typical for early modern monumental portraiture, the youth rests his right arm on a table covered with exuberant patterned fabric. The sitter is clearly a person of high rank. He wears a doublet, a velvet hose, stockings, a black cloak lined with golden silk, and duckbill shoes.[80] Adding to the youth's high social status, he holds a handkerchief and a pair of gloves, garments associated with courtly manners. A high hat lies on the table, confirming the young man's adherence to the latest elite European fashions. Though he might well be perceived as a German or Italian nobleman, he is a Pole. The portrait depicts

[78] Peter Burke, 'Did Europe Exist Before 1700?', *History of European Ideas* 1 (1980): 21.

[79] Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

[80] *Portrety osobistości polskich: znajdujące się w pokojach i w Galerii Pałacu w Wilanowie : katalog* (Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1967), cat. no. 114, pp. 110–111.

Sebastian Lubomirski (1546–1613), a wealthy nobleman who later in his life held many lucrative state offices, including the first senatorial appointment secured by the Lubomirski family.

There is nothing unusual about this painting. Many European noblemen of the day would have had similar portraits commissioned, in which they appear in a similar type of dress. In the mid-sixteenth century Polish-Lithuanian nobility mostly followed the same fashions as their counterparts elsewhere in Europe. However, things were soon to take a different turn. In a portrait of Lubomirski painted some forty years later (Fig. 1.2), we see what looks to be a different man. An inscription at the bottom right refers to the sitter as 'Castellan of Wojnicz', an office of state that Lubomirski acquired in 1603, marking his steady upward progression towards the highest echelons of Polish-Lithuanian nobility. The all'antica background, and the full-length confident pose have not changed compared to the earlier portrait. The dress, however, no longer corresponds with prevalent European fashions of the day. Instead of donning the doublet, cape and hose, which were still popular in many parts of western Europe in this period, Lubomirski wears an Ottoman-inspired silk kaftan (*żupan*), a fur-fitted cape (*delia*) and a felt rounded hat of Hungarian origin (hence its Polish name *magierka*, 'a little Hungarian'). The hat is adorned with a silver pin with feathers (*szkofia*), an ornament that became a popular decoration of Polish-Lithuanian headgear.[81] Gone are the gloves, exchanged for an eastern sabre hanging from a metal belt, which is also Ottomanesque in style. The courtly duckbill shoes have been replaced by yellow leather heeled boots that bring associations with hunting or military pastimes, and draw parallels with Ottoman fashions. Add the Ottoman-style dress, and the Pole appears out of sync with the western European sartorial codes of the day. What happened over the forty years that separate Lubomirski's portraits?

[81] Janina Ruszczycówna, ed., *Portret polski XVII i XVIII wieku: katalog wystawy* (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe, 1977), cat. no. 28, pp. 32–33.

This chapter will trace this sartorial shift across early modern imagery, examining how it enabled Polish-Lithuanian nobility to imagine a shared habitus with all noble inhabitants of both the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These countries had since 1386 been aligned through a dynastic union under the Jagiellonian dynasty, and in 1569 became a dualistic confederate state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[82] The increased circulation of maps in this period created and disseminated a cartographic image of Poland-Lithuania that could be shared among the inhabitants of all the provinces of this vast political union, giving rise to a collective self-image for inhabitants of the burgeoning nation.[83] The popularity of portraiture too helped create a shared sartorial idiom for the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional nobility of Poland-Lithuania.[84] Be they Lithuanian, Polish, Prussian or Ruthenian, the nobility began to assert similarities between themselves in these portraits, particularly as they circulated across Poland-Lithuania in the prints commemorating military victories, sessions of parliament, and the country's monarchs.[85] Adherence to Ottomanesque fashions became particularly pronounced in the late sixteenth century, precisely at a time when Lubomirski commissioned his portrait as Castellan of Wojnicz (Fig. 1.2).

The assimilation of Ottoman fashions in Poland-Lithuania has received quite a bit of scholarly attention. Art historians and historians of costume have pointed to the geographical location of Poland-Lithuania at the crossroads between east and west, a location that facilitated

[82] Robert I. Frost, 'Union as Process: Confused Sovereignty and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1385–1796', in *Forging the State: European State Formation and the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707*, ed. Andrew Mackillop and Micheál Ó Siochrú (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2009), 69–92.

[83] See Karol Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography from the 15th to the 18th Century*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (Amsterdam: Meridian, 1982).

[84] On portraits, see Tadeusz Chrzanowski, *Portret staropolski* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1995).

[85] Agnieszka Bender, "Grafika," in *Wczesny i dojrzały barok (XVII wiek)*, ed. Zbigniew Bania, Sztuka polska 4 (Warsaw: Arkady, 2013), 291–357.

mercantile and cultural exchanges between the Commonwealth and the world of Islam.[86] This chapter will similarly foreground Poland-Lithuania's cultural liminality, its self-declared position as a frontier of the Christian parts of Europe. But rather than treating the mimicry of Ottoman fashions as a cross-cultural dialogue that took place merely between the Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, I will focus on the status of Polish-Lithuanian costume as an allegedly native sartorial form that can reveal the Commonwealth's self-identification as a part of Europe, and thus put it in dialogue with multiple peoples. I will demonstrate that Polish-Lithuanian nobility so effectively indigenised these Ottomanesque fashions, promoting them as part of the country's heritage, that they soon lost sight of the causal relationship between their costume and that of the Ottoman Empire. Rather than making comparisons with the Ottomans, most Polish-Lithuanian writers engaged in enumerating the advantages of the costume they considered 'native' over the sartorial fashions of other Christian Europeans. Despite similarities with Ottoman costume, many Polish-Lithuanian authors compared their dress with that of the key nations of Christendom.

As the nobility of Poland-Lithuania were embracing Ottomanesque fashions as their national costume, they were also becoming more aware of the cartographic representation of their country. This was happening at the time when the traditional collective identity for elite Europeans, that of Christendom, was losing its former lustre.[87] The Protestant Reformation, and earlier the Schism with Eastern Orthodoxy, destroyed Christendom's perceived unity. Simultaneously, the incursions of the Ottoman Empire into the Balkans and Hungary shrank Christendom's political reach in Europe, while western European colonialism exported Christianity into the Americas, Africa and Asia, cutting this religion's footing as a

[86] Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Orient w polskiej kulturze artystycznej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959); Maria Szuppe, "Un marchand du Roi de Pologne en Perse, 1601–1602," *Moyen Orient & Ocean Indien, XVI–XIX siècles* 3 (1986): 81–110.

[87] Mark Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648* (London: Penguin, 2014), 1–37.

quintessentially European creed. Yet the crisis of Christendom as a collective unifying force did not go unanswered. Around the same time, a new group self-identification for elite Europeans was forged under the aegis of 'Europe'.[88] Inspired by the printed editions of classical geographies by Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela and Strabo, which were first published in the fifteenth century, 'Europe' was conceived as a shared geographical space, reconfiguring an older form of association based on creed.[89] As opposed to 'Christendom' whose boundaries were clearly defined by the faith community that it represented, 'Europe' was a notion that was as ambiguous as it was open-ended. The advent of map-making nonetheless helped turn the cartographic representation of Europe into a form of group self-image. Because Greek and Roman treatises superimposed the geographical outlines of the classical era onto an early modern geopolitical structure, the new idea of 'Europe' did not follow divisions between Christian and Muslim nations, but instead encompassed an entire landmass between the Atlantic Ocean in the west and the river Don and the Black Sea in the east, exactly as it was defined by authorities like Ptolemy.

This chapter will address how costume and representations of territory styled Poland-Lithuania as a frontier between Christian and Muslim states. The Commonwealth will thus provide a context through which we can better understand what 'Europe' meant for early modern Europeans; specifically where it began and where it ended. Historical material from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries suggests that as the Polish-Lithuanian nobility were taking on Ottomanesque fashions, and as they saw their confederate country visualised through the lens of

[88] Florian Kläger and Gerd Bayer, 'Introduction: Early Modern Constructions of Europe', in *Early Modern Constructions of Europe: Literature, Culture, History*, ed. Florian Kläger and Gerd Bayer (London: Routledge, 2016), 1–11.

[89] Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality* (London: MacMillan, 1995), 44.

cartography, they were in fact participating in the early stages of Europe's Europeanisation.[90] This was the process of reifying 'Europe' into a form of group identification that was semantically expressed through that very term, and visualised through representations of Europe's cartographic outline. As this shift was getting underway, European Christians were drawing connections—albeit with ambivalence—between themselves and those considered outsiders. This association was possible because the cartographic image of Europe included lands that were not a part of Christendom, thus confronting Christian Europeans with the cultural heterogeneity of what they considered to be *their* part of the world.

Examining the Commonwealth's status as Christendom's eastern frontier, this chapter will put into dialogue the conventions that radiated from the major cultural centres west of the Polish-Lithuanian border with the material forms that were arriving from the east. The cultural landscape of Poland-Lithuania was a combination of the textual, visual and material forms of Latin, Orthodox and Muslim Europe, bringing these worlds into a close entanglement. At the core of this chapter's analytical enquiry is the process of embracing Poland-Lithuania's location on Europe's eastern periphery. My larger claim is about the bounds and limits of early modern Europe. Polish-Lithuanian creative adaptation of Ottoman costume coincided with the political union of Poland-Lithuania in 1569 and the ongoing construction of a shared self-image for Polish-Lithuanian nobility. This self-representation made explicit references to 'Europe', while finding its material expression (and catalyst) in Ottoman fashions. As such, it resulted from the simultaneous mimicry of both eastern and western cultural traditions. This seeming contradiction suggests that the idea of 'Europe' was a spectrum rather than a fixed, homogenous entity circumscribed by the limitations of any given religion, society or culture.

[90] See John M. Headley, *The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 66–102.

Attending to this difficulty to define Europe, I will thus explore how paying a closer attention to a culturally polyphonic environment of Poland-Lithuania can expose the blurry line between Christian Europe and the world of Islam (in the form of 'Turkey in Europe'). Can the binary of Christian/Muslim and familiar/exotic, which traditionally structures our definition of early modern European history, be challenged by early modern conceptualisations of the continent's eastern periphery? Exploring the visual and material representations of Polish-Lithuanian nativeness, this chapter will argue that Poland-Lithuania's unique location on Christendom's eastern frontier makes it a test case for Europe's wider remit, which extends beyond the territories usually ascribed to Christian states. By providing evidence that disrupts the essentialising category of 'Europe'—an issue still relevant in the twenty-first century—the Commonwealth's ongoing heterogeneity offers ways to rethink the continent in terms of a broader spectrum of entangled cultural forces.

Mapping Europe's Eastern Periphery as a Means of Self-Definition

Poland-Lithuania's location meant that the Mediterranean-centric Greco-Roman geographers neglected the region. This mattered in the early modern perceptions of the continent that were to a large extent formed through a prism of classical knowledge.[91] The geographic names 'Polonia' and 'Lituania' never appeared in classical sources, as opposed to 'Germania', 'Italia', or 'Gallia'. This omission caused an issue for Polish-Lithuanian elites: Compared to some other European regions, their homeland seemed to have lacked an illustrious history. A solution to this problem was provided by the renaissance of Ptolemy's *Geography* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[91] Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992), 1–10.

This was an atlas containing both textual and cartographical descriptions of the world known to the ancients. Brought to Florence in undocumented circumstances in early fifteenth century, probably from Constantinople, and translated from Greek to Latin by Manuel Chrysoloras,[92] *Geography* inspired geometrically driven representations of the known world by providing a method for charting linear depiction of land on a gridded and uniformly scaled surface.[93]

While changing the ways in which land, distance and location were conceptualised, the translation of Ptolemy simultaneously reinforced the classical nomenclature in early modern political geography. For example, *Geography* describes the lands encompassing Poland-Lithuania in the early modern period through a classical term 'European Sarmatia'. This philological designation relied on many classical sources, which besides Ptolemy included Tacitus, Strabo, Pliny and Pomponius Mela.[94] Medieval chronicles maintained this nomenclature.[95] It was, however, the early modern re-reading of Ptolemy that reified 'European Sarmatia' as a standard geographical reference for the combined Polish and Lithuanian lands.[96]

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[92] Patrick Gautier Dalché, 'The Reception of Ptolemy's Geography (End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century)', in *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. David Woodward, vol. 3, The History of Cartography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 285–90.

[93] Zur Shalev, 'Main Themes in the Study of Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance', in *Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance*, ed. Zur Shalev and Charles Burnett (London: The Warburg Institute, 2011), 7–9; Alexander Jones, 'Ptolemy's Geography: A Reform That Failed', in *Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance*, ed. Zur Shalev and Charles Burnett (London: The Warburg Institute, 2011), 15–30; Katharina N. Piechocki, 'Erroneous Mappings: Ptolemy and the Visualization of Europe's East', in *Early Modern Cultures of Translation*, ed. Karen Newman and Jane Tylus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 81. For a recent critique of the notions of improved cartographic projection and the supposed novelty of the coordinate system, which were tratitionally associated with the so-called Ptolemaic revolution, see Sean Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World: Florence, Constantinople, and the Renaissance of Geography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 36–44.

[94] Pomponius Mela, *Description of the World*, trans. Frank E. Romer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 110.

[95] Tadeusz Ulewicz, *Sarmacja: Studium z problematyki słowiańskiej XV i XVI w.* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Studium Słowiańskiego Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1950), 17–32.

[96] Bożena Modelska-Strzelecka, *Odrodzenie Geografii Ptolemeusza w XV w.: tradycja kartograficzna* (Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Geograficzne, 1960); Jadwiga Bzinkowska, *Od Sarmacji do Polonii: studia nad początkami obrazu kartograficznego Polski* (Cracow: Nakł. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1994), 13–25; Lucyna Szaniawska, *Sarmacja na mapach Ptolomeusza w edycjach jego 'Geografii'* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1993).

The first set of maps rendered in western Europe according to Ptolemy's geometrical scheme was probably made by Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), though we only know it through a later version by the Benedictine friar Nicolaus Germanus (c. 1420–c. 1490), which was later to be used in printed editions.[97] Germanus used the classical tripartite division of the world into Europe, Asia and Africa; his eighth map of European lands depicted a territory that roughly corresponded with early modern Polish-Lithuanian state (Fig. 1.3). This representation was crucial for the conceptualisation of Poland-Lithuania among the readers of this manuscript and many printed atlases to come. Here, in direct adherence to Ptolemy's description,[98] the classical term 'European Sarmatia' encompasses the lands associated in the fifteenth century with Poland-Lithuania. This cartographic depiction is circumscribed by the contours of classical chorographical discourse. Thus, the Roman province of Dacia borders the European Sarmatia in the south, the Vistula river in the west, the Baltic Sea (*Oceanus Sarmaticus*) in the north, the Don (*Tanais*) and the Black Sea (*Palus Meotis*) in the east. Although depicting an ancient territory, the map would draw obvious parallels with the early modern Polish-Lithuanian polity.

The philologically inspired notion of 'European Sarmatia' soon became associated with the actual constituent lands of Poland-Lithuania. For example, in the 1513 Strasburg edition of Ptolemy's atlas, we see the name projected onto the contours of early modern political borders (Fig. 1.4). Here, 'European Sarmatia' is a cartographical unit formed by Poland, Prussia, Lithuania and Ruthenia, with Hungary added to the picture. Around this time, these lands were all realms of the Jagiellonian dynasty, a princely family of Lithuanian origin. Moreover, the cities shown on the map are early modern urban communities rather than settlements from

[97] Dalché, 'The Reception of Ptolemy's Geography (End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century)', 320–21; Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography from the 15th to the 18th Century*, 25–27.

[98] Claudius Ptolemy, *Geography*, trans. Edward Luther Stevenson (New York: The New York public library, 1932), book 3, chap. 5.

Ptolemy's time. Thus, 'European Sarmatia' is depicted as a coherent geographic entity that could for the first time easily be situated vis-à-vis other European geopolitical units represented on the leaves of modernised Ptolemaic atlases.

The diffusion of the idea of 'European Sarmatia' owed much to the popularity of Ptolemy's *Geography*. Until 1550, there were twenty-six editions in various European cities,[99] reifying 'European Sarmatia' as a concrete geopolitical unit on the edge of Europe. To the north-east was Muscovy, which was commensurate with Ptolemy's 'Asian Sarmatia'; to the south-east lay the European parts of the Ottoman Empire, often described as 'Turkey in Europe' by early modern cartographers. 'European Sarmatia' was thus represented as a land at a crossroads. It was an integral part of Christian Europe, but, at the same time, it appeared historically related to Muscovy, or 'Asian Sarmatia'—the connection is evident in the regions' shared name. What disconnected it from Muscovy, however, tied it to the 'Turkey in Europe', which was the term that map-makers applied to the Ottoman Empire's European provinces. While 'European Sarmatia' was Christian Europe's peripheral region, 'Turkey in Europe' was the European region of an Asian empire. Such notional relegation of Poland-Lithuania to the margins of western Christendom thus allows us to see the condition of peripherality as a mode of being in-between, at the periphery of one imagined community and in close proximity of another.[100]

A map of Germania in the same Strassburg edition of Ptolemy (Fig. 1.5) provides further commentary on the liminal location of the 'European Sarmatia'. What in the previous map (Fig. 1.4) belonged to western Poland is now represented as the eastern reaches of Germany. This, again, is a classical geography superimposed on the early modern political landscape. In fact,

[99] See Henry Newton Stevens, *Ptolemy's Geography: A Brief Account of All the Printed Editions down to 1730* (Amsterdam: Meridian, 1973), 14–25, 106–108.

[100] For the discussion of imagined communities, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

Germany's eastern margins are described as 'Polish lands' (*Polonie Pars*), and the largely German-speaking Prussia is outside the bounds of the ancient Germania altogether, effectively conveying an early modern reality, where Prussia was under the suzerainty of Poland. In the map, it is the river Vistula that separates 'Germania' from the 'European Sarmatia', splitting early modern Poland into two parts. This arbitrary alienation of a sixteenth-century polity followed from Ptolemy's description, which was often slavishly repeated by early modern writers. For example, humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464; since 1458 Pope Pius II), replicated Ptolemy's mapping in his description of Europe, which was first published posthumously in 1490.[101] The volume contained one of the first printed historical accounts of Poland, which Piccolomini calls 'Sarmatia'. In outlining this country, he reminds the reader of the region's classical past: 'the Vistula river … forms the boundary between Sarmatia and Germany. … The [east] side of the river was under Sarmatian jurisdiction, [west] side, German.'[102]

The border between Germania and Sarmatia, clearly defined by the Vistula, created an undesired effect for Poles: most of their country appeared as historically uprooted. Lacking classical lineage for their territory, Poles risked looking like migrants who merely settled these lands after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Early modern editions of Ptolemy's *Geography* reified Germany's wide eastern reach by accepting the Vistula as an ancient borderline between the Germanic and Sarmatian peoples. The Strassburg version of 1513 takes this historicist determinism to the extreme by dividing the area into two parts: the independent country in the east, and the Polish province of Germany in the west. Looking at this map, one could infer that

[101] For a list of printed editions between 1490 and 1707, see Nicola Casella, "Pio II tra geografia e storia: La 'Cosmographia,'" *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 95 (1972): 108–12.

[102] Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Europe (c.1400-1458)*, ed. Nancy Bisaha, trans. Robert D. Brown (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 148–49.

historical and contemporaneous geographies were interchangeable. This not only collided with the interests of the Polish court and the country's elites, but also suggested pro-German political and cultural loyalties in western Poland, which were not the case in these provinces.

Certainly, making such claims was appealing for German historiographers in the aftermath of the rediscovery of the *Germania* by the Roman historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus, a historical and ethnographic study of the Germanic tribes. Tacitus described these peoples as a valiant nation independent from the Roman Empire. Thus, when German humanist Conrad Celtes (1459–1508) used the authority of Ptolemy in his *Quattuor libri amorum* to claim that the eastern border of Germany was on the Vistula, it was to confirm Germany's independent ancient past.[103] The belief of Hamburg-based historian Albert Krantz (c. 1450–1517) in the idea of 'Germania magna', itself inspired by Tacitus and the falsified history of Annius of Viterbo, was equally agonistic. This land—construed from philological fragments—consisted of the German-speaking Theutonia in the south, Saxonia on the Baltic, Scandia on the Scandinavian Peninsula, and Vandalia in the east. For this last province, Krantz conflated the Germanic Vandals with the Slavic Wends, and added Poland-Sarmatia, Prussia and Lithuania to the mixture, thus usurping the whole territory in a specifically German-centric history. Such claims will continue into the seventeenth century. For example, Joan Blaeu's 1643 world atlas continued to depict a map of Germany ('nova totius Germaniae descriptio') as containing Prussia and most Polish territories. This explains why several western European luminaries believed that Poland west of the Vistula was populated by ethnic Germans. Among them was the English map maker John Speed (1552–1629). In his atlas, *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World* first published in 1627, Speed conflated the western parts of Poland with the Holy Roman Empire:

[103] Konrad Celtis, *Quattuor libri amorum*, 18 and 30. See also Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna a humanistyczna historia narodowa (1500-1700)*, trans. Zdzisław Owczarek (Cracow: Universitas, 2011), 99.

> The Kingdome of Poland borders upon the East side of Germany, and indeede as far as the River Vistula, it is accounted a part of the Empire: and useth the same speech, religions and customes as the other Territories. … Beyond the River as it shrinkes from the seate of Christianitie, so it begins to degenerate into a kind of Heathenish rudenesse, which favours of their predecessors.[104]

Speed's commentary situates the Commonwealth on Europe's periphery and describes how one encounters signs of barbarity in traversing from the country's west to its east. As the writer himself had never travelled to Poland-Lithuania, his observations on the country's liminal character clearly were based on the descriptions of this land and its peoples that circulated across Europe.[105] One of the most influential works to accuse Poles and Lithuanians of being crude and unsophisticated was *Europe* ('De Europa') by the already mentioned Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464), who in 1458 became Pope Pius II. Between 1490 and 1707, his treatise was printed on thirteen separate occasions in Germany, Italy and France.[106] In words that were to reverberate across geographical and historical accounts for many decades, Piccolomini described Poland as 'less than handsome', and its inhabitants as living in houses made of wood and mud.[107] Lithuania was in this account 'almost entirely covered in bogs and forests', and many of its inhabitants still worshipped 'idols', remaining 'trapped in heathen blindness'.[108] These remarks, made in the mid-fifteenth century and largely based on the classical notions of the 'European Sarmatia',[109] had long-lasting influence.

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[104] John Speed, *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World* (London, 1631), 31.

[105] For example, for Italian perceptions of Poland, see Pietro Marchesani, *L' Immagine della Polonia e dei Polacchi in Italia tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Florence: Olschki, 1986).

[106] Nancy Bisaha, 'Introduction', in *Europe (C. 1400-1458)*, by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, ed. Nancy Bisaha, trans. Robert Brown (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 36.

[107] Piccolomini, *Europe*, 138.

[108] Ibid., 141 and 143.

[109] Ibid., 148–49.

One might then imagine that the Polish-Lithuanian elites would reject the association of their country with the European Sarmatia of classical geographers, but in fact they adopted it as their own founding narrative. Early modern Polish scholars (likely under the influence of their patrons) were keen to flag Poland-Lithuania's connections with the ancient 'European Sarmatia'. Although initially it was Italian and German scholars who made this link, mostly to mark this eastern country as a semi-barbaric place, Poles eventually took over the reins, turning their Sarmatian past into a positive self-identification. A manifest example of this practice is the map of 'European Sarmatia' by the Pole Andrzej Pograbka (Fig. 1.6). Published in 1570 in Venice, Pograbka's map was one of the most circulated representations of the Commonwealth. Rather than calling the state using its conventional modern name 'Polonia', Pograbka prefers to give it its classical designation 'European Sarmatia'. Pograbka at least dispels with some of Ptolemy's views—for the Pole, the European Sarmatia's west border is on the river Oder rather than on the Vistula—but he essentially keeps Ptolemy's interpretation of the Vistula as a border river. Instead of marking a frontier between Germania and Sarmatia, however, the Vistula now marks a civilizational demarcation line within the Commonwealth itself. A quick look at Pograbka's map makes clear that the country is unevenly developed, with western provinces punctured by cities, while the eastern parts have only a few urban centres and are instead covered by omnipresent forests. Rendering an image of diminishing cultural infrastructure, a decreasing sequence which runs from west to east, Pograbka's map presents the Commonwealth as a passage to the edges of Europe.

The reason for this schematic representation of the Commonwealth's developmental spectrum is partly due to Pograbka's Polish bias. His cartographic depiction of the Commonwealth was largely based on the earlier maps of Poland (c. 1526) and Sarmatia (1528?)

by Bernard Wapowski (1528), and the map of Poland by Wacław Grodecki (1558); the latter likely used Wapowski's maps, which we now know only from fragments.[110] These maps were subsequently used by Sebastian Münster, Gerardus Mercator and Abraham Ortelius in their cartographic representations of Polish-Lithuanian lands,[111] and in such new guise circulated widely across Europe, familiarising beholders with the image of Poland and Lithuania as a common geopolitical unit. Grodecki was later commissioned to scale down his map so that it could accompany the treatise on Poland by Prince-Bishop of Ermland Martin Kromer, first published in 1555. Grodecki's map was made before the full union with Lithuania (1569), and focused largely on the Polish lands. This was a Polonocentric perspective, which treated Lithuania as a province of Poland, a perception not based in the legal status of the Grand Duchy. It is thus of notice that Pograbka decided to call the lands that he mapped 'European Sarmatia' rather than 'Polonia', even though his map was clearly based on Grodecki's cartographical model.

Difference in publication time can explain this semantic shift. Unlike the previous cartographic works of Grodecki and Wapowski, Pograbka's map of the European Sarmatia was published after the 1569 union. Made in a new political context, Pograbka's work accordingly takes a different perspective on nationhood, while still conveying the economic lead of the western—Polish—lands of the union. The country is now presented explicitly as encompassing the contours of ancient European Sarmatia, championing a shared identity based on inhabiting one common land. This conflation of classical geography and early modern cartographic

[110] Zsolt G. Török, "Renaissance Cartography in East-Central Europe, ca. 1450–1650," in *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. David Woodward, vol. 3, The History of Cartography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1816–20, 1833–34.

[111] Bolesław Olszewicz, *Kartografia polska XV-XVII wieku: Przegląd chronologiczno-bibliograficzny*, ed. Jerzy Ostrowski (Warsaw: IHN PAN, 2004), 12–13, 24.

representation of land visualised a shared cultural space for learned Poles, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Prussians and other wellborn peoples of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Looking at this cartographic representation, early modern Polish-Lithuanian viewers could take a conceptual possession of this landmass, while developing stronger emotional links with fellow 'Sarmatians'.[112] Through this and similar images, an imagined community of common 'Sarmatian' values came into being.[113] This casting of national identification in cartographic abstraction eventually allowed for the union of noble citizens into a single Polish-Lithuanian nation—this ruling group took the story of European Sarmatia as their founding narrative.[114]

By building on the classical notion of European Sarmatia, maps entered into a larger discourse that purported to address the geographical contours of Poland-Lithuania in terms of its cultural self-definitions. Simultaneously with the visualisation of Polish-Lithuanian lands, a historical narrative for the peoples inhabiting these lands was being developed. Polish treatises on European Sarmatia gained momentum in the sixteenth century offering a new potential for nation-making.[115] Already in 1521, in his *De vetustatibus Polonorum*, Justus Ludwik Decjusz (German: Jost Ludwig Dietz), secretary to King Sigismund I Jagiellon (r. 1506–1548), defined Sarmatians as encompassing Poles, Prussians, Lithuanians and Ruthenians. This text, therefore, had preceded the formal political union between Poland and Lithuania by almost five decades. This humanistic interpretation of the common origin of the four major peoples of the Polish-Lithuanian state led the way for the development of a shared self-identification for the nobility.

[112] See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 108.

[113] The term is Benedict Anderson's. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

[114] Tomas Venclova, "Mit o początku," *Teksty* 4 (1974): 104–16.

[115] Kloczkowski, "Polacy a cudzoziemcy W XV Wieku," in *Swojskość i cudzoziemszczyzna w dziejach kultury polskiej*, ed. Zofia Stefanowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1973), 57; Tadeusz Chrzanowski, "Orient i orientalizm w kulturze staropolskiej," in *Orient i orientalizm w sztuce*, ed. Elżbieta Karwowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1986), 45; Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Genealogia sarmatyzmu* (Warszawa: Tow. Wydawnicze "Łuk," 1947); Ulewicz, *Sarmacja*.

The projection of Sarmatian identity onto the entire Polish-Lithuanian union was a sixteenth-century development. Earlier Polish writers who had appropriated the classical concept of Sarmatia for their historiographical works constructed strictly Polonocentric narratives. For example, canon Jan Długosz (1415–1480), who wrote his voluminous work *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae* in the mid-fifteenth century,[116] associated Sarmatians only with ancient Poles and Ruthenians. According to the author, these Slavic peoples had been known under this name in antiquity.[117] Długosz does not specify when Poles-Sarmatians settled in east-central Europe, though he hints that it must have happened sometime in late antiquity.[118] Moreover, he treats Lithuanians as foreigners (as they allegedly descended from Romans). For the Polish scholar Maciej Miechowita (1457–1523) seven decades later, these divisions remained intact.[119] But his widely circulating *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis Asiana et Europeana* (1517) firmly distinguished between Poles, Lithuanian and Ruthenians who inhabited the land called *Sarmatia Europea*, and the Muscovites and Tartars (whom he calls Scythians) who lived east of the Don in the land known as *Sarmatia Asiatica*.[120] This created potential for the Jagiellonian realms to embrace a shared self-identification. Subsequent historiographers capitalised on this potential.

[116] The work was was never published in full, but it circulated widely throughout early modernity. Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna*, 64.

[117] Jan Długosz, *Roczniki czyli kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego*, vol. 1 and 2 (Warsaw: PWN, 1961), 137.

[118] Before that moment, Poles allegedly lived in Pannonia and later in Slavonia. Ibid., 1 and 2:95, 164–65.

[119] Maciej z Miechowa, *Opis Sarmacji Azjatyckiej i Europejskiej oraz tego, co się w nich znajduje*, z języka łacińskiego przeł. i komentarzem opatrzył Tadeusz Bieńkowski, wstęp Henryk Barycz, posłowie Waldemar Voisé, z serii: 'Źródła do dziejów Nauki i Techniki' t. XIV, Ossolineum 1972.

[120] Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Genealogia Sarmatyzmu* (Warsaw: Łuk, 1947), 17.

Polish treatises on European Sarmatia circulated across Europe in the sixteenth century offering new potential for nation-making.[121] That the royal secretary Decjusz should embrace a common origin for all Polish-Lithuanian peoples is not surprising. After all, he worked for the Jagiellonian monarch Sigismund I who reigned over all these lands and had a dynastic interest in tying them closer together. Another important treatise to advocate such understanding of a unified Polish-Lithuanian people, *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum*, was published in 1555 and dedicated to King Sigismund II Augustus Jagiellon (r. 1548–1572). Written by the royal secretary and Bishop of Ermland Marcin Kromer (German: Martin Cromer), the text—like Decjusz's *De vetustatibus Polonorum*—naturalised the Jagiellonian rule by asserting that Poles, Lithuanians and Prussians were all Sarmatians.[122]

Yet the movement towards a closer integration of Polish-Lithuanian peoples was not strictly a Jagiellonian project. The first treatise to provide an explicit and detailed account of common genealogy for all the peoples of Poland-Lithuania was *Kronika* (1582) written in Polish by Polish Catholic priest living in Lithuania, Maciej Stryjkowski (1547–1593). Funded by Polish-Lithuanian magnates rather than the court,[123] Stryjkowski mixed Polish historiography with the Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles (though he omits their anti-Polish character), and claims that the Polish-Lithuanian union re-connected all Sarmatian peoples under the aegis of a single state.[124] He accordingly recounts the entangled past of all the Sarmatian nations focusing on shared heritage and points of historical intersection. Stryjkowski's chronicle was thus the first

[121] Kloczkowski 57; Tadeusz Chrzanowski, "Orient i orientalizm w kulturze staropolskiej," in *Orient i orientalizm w sztuce*, ed. Elżbieta Karwowska (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986), 45. See also, Mańkowski, Genealogia sarmatyzmu; T. Venclova, "Mit o początku," *Teksty* no. 4 (1974): 104-116; T. Ulewicz. *Sarmacja. Studium z problematyki słowiańskiej XV i XVI wieku* (Cracow, 1950).

[122] Marcin Kromer, *Polska: czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach, urzędach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie*, trans. Stefan Kazikowski (Olsztyn: Pojezierze, 1977), 15.

[123] Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna*, 589.

[124] Maciej Stryjkowski, *Kronika*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1846), XV and XL.

programmatic account that strongly connected Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian histories. The volume had a wide reception in the Commonwealth, and was popularised throughout Europe by the work of Polish writer and soldier of Italian origin Alessandro Guagnini who in 1578 published *Sarmatia Europae descriptio*, possibly a plagiarised version of Stryjkowski's manuscript.[125] Like Stryjkowski, Guagnini included the previously separate Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian histories uniting them under Sarmatian auspices.

Stryjkowski's account of the genealogical connections between all nations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was not the only way to write the history of a newly united people. Calvinist nobleman Stanisław Sarnicki, who published the Latin *Annales, sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum* in 1587, described the major peoples of the Commonwealth as coexisting since the fourteenth century. Although he calls them Sarmatians and claims that the Sarmatians had always inhabited the same lands in north-eastern Europe,[126] Sarnicki nonetheless treats Polish, Lithuanian, Ruthenian and Prussian histories separately. This is not a coherent narrative of one Sarmatian people as in Stryjkowski's *Kronika*, but rather a history of neighbouring nations that had interacted with one another for centuries, but had united only recently.[127] In Ruthenia and Prussia, similar integrating processes materialised in historical writing as local historians began to update their nations' histories.[128] Nonetheless, the competing discourses of Lithuanians as allegedly descending from the Romans, Prussians as heirs to Goths, and Ruthenians as the successors of the Kievan Rus were never fully displaced.[129] By no means

[125] Stryjkowski claims that this was his manuscript that Guagnini stole. Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna*, 590.

[126] Stanisław Sarnicki, *Annales*, 1582, unpaginated. See also Ibid., 239.

[127] Ibid., 244.

[128] Ibid., 594–655.

[129] Janusz Tazbir, 'Polish National Consciousness in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10, no. 3/4 (December 1986): 318.

was the creation of a Polish-Lithuanian national community a coherent process. For example, in the first Polish chronicle published in the vernacular, Marcin Bielski's *Chronicle of the World* ('Kronika Swiata', 1551), Sarmatia is still only linked with Poland; Lithuania is not part of this historiographical construct.[130] Though re-issued many times, the Polonocentrism of Bielski's *Chronicle* was never revised.

Adding to the complexity, the notion of a shared Polish-Lithuanian self-image was being formed amidst many different political forces, often with opposite agendas. The historiography was created amidst a conflict between the court whose supporters preferred to see the ancestors of the monarch represented as ideal types, and the nobility who emphasised historical precedents for self-rule and sought to discredit the concept of monarchical sovereignty.[131] The Jagiellonian monarchs, on the other hand, sought to strengthen the power of the crown. In this attempt, they therefore needed to ensure that historical rulers were represented as just, victorious, pious and wise. On the other end were the landed gentry who began to wield considerable political influence over the king and high nobility.[132] Because it depicted the first Jagiellonian monarch in bad light, Długosz's treatise was never published in full. Though some parts were published in 1615, the printing was halted with a royal edict, and most copies were confiscated. Miechowita's work was also censored for its negative attitude to the Jagiellons, though a revised version secured permission for printing in 1521.[133] Royal secretary Decjusz, on the other hand, had no problems publishing his Jagiellon-friendly treatise. Kromer, too, wrote a largely pro-royalist account of Poland's history. In a contrary fashion, Bielski's popular *Chronicle* had to be

[130] Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna*, 178.

[131] One exception was Prussian historiography created by burghers.

[132] J. Miller, 'The Polish Nobility and the Renaissance Monarchy: The "Execution of the Laws" movement: Part two', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 4.1 (1984), pp. 1–24.

[133] Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna*, 141.

amended before subsequent editions could leave the press; the original version was seen by censors as ostentatiously promoting the gentry's vision of parliamentary sovereignty and supporting Protestant views. Sarnicki had even less luck. As he was a Calvinist, his *Annales* ended up on the index of prohibited books.

The idea of Sarmatia, although understood differently by different authors, nonetheless had a significant unifying impact on Poland-Lithuania's diverse peoples. These adaptations of classical nomenclature and chorography—acquired through western European mediation—helped Poles, Lithuanians, Prussians and Ruthenians to write a common history, a process that supported a shared political project. Appropriating external models, Polish-Lithuanian writers used them to their own benefit. The reasons for this appropriation were likely similar to those of German historians such as Conrad Celtes who juxtaposed their own allegedly virtuous past with that of the corrupted Romans. Through a selective use of Tacitus, these historians turned Germany's historical barbarism into the necessary prerequisite for the modern Germans' moral integrity and incorruptibility.[134] Polish historians came under a similar double-edged sword: they needed to mitigate their lack of Roman legacy while claiming a high moral ground in the modern era. In this case, the Sarmatian heritage effectively qualified the country's peripherality as elevated by its entanglement with the classical world.

Although Poland-Lithuania was not part of the Mediterranean region, its people were vindicated by their Sarmatian past to have had a long history, which in turn linked them to Greco-Roman antiquity, at the same time emphasising their difference. Despite appropriating classical writers, as well as Italian and German humanists, Polish and Lithuanian historians turned the classical ideas and observations on their head, adding stories and interpretations that

[134] Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography*, 41–46.

presented the inhabitants of the peripheral Poland-Lithuania as allegedly more ancient, more virtuous and more valiant than the descendants of the Romans and the Germanic peoples. This historiographical assertion assumed autonomy for Polish-Lithuanian customs while indicating their interconnectivity with Europe's classical heritage. To not do so would risk writing the Commonwealth out of Greco-Roman antiquity. But although local humanists projected Poland-Lithuania against a European background, it was a mottled background that could provide support for mottled narratives. This projection became ubiquitous not only through imagining a geographical space but also picturing the people who inhabited it, to which this chapter now turns.

Costume and Polish-Lithuanian Political Nation

The Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse. Poles, Ruthenians, Lithuanians and Prussians constituted the majority of inhabitants, but both countries had large minorities of Jews, Armenians, Tatars, Scots and Dutchmen, to mention only the most populous groups. While Roman Catholicism was the *de facto* state religion, Eastern Orthodoxy (since 1595 together with Greek Catholic Church), various Protestant denominations of Christianity, Judaism and even Islam could claim many adherents in the land. The region was also linguistically varied: Polish, Ruthenian, Lithuanian and German were the most commonly spoken, with Yiddish and Turkic languages also in wide use. Poland-Lithuania contained many parallel traditions and heritages, which were constantly in flux. The years preceding and following the Union of Lublin of 1569, however, marked a period of notable cultural change. Creating a dualistic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Union of

Lublin established a single parliament for the confederate state, a common coin and defence policy for the two polities that had remained in dynastic union for nearly two centuries.

The new political landscape paved the way for a development of a pan-Commonwealth shared identification for the large nobility of the new state, a class that according to various estimates numbered between five and ten percent of the country's population.[135] All male nobles were legal citizens. The emerging Polish-Lithuanian identity was not built on ethnicity, but rather on mutual participation in the affairs of the state: a type of group self-identification that historians call 'political nation'.[136] Equating Poland-Lithuania with ancient Sarmatia provided a powerful rhetoric to extend the concept of nation to a shared historical past. A commonality that was cultivated among Commonwealth nobles was the growing popularity of Ottomanesque costume, such as the one we have seen depicted in the portrait of Sebastian Lubomirski painted c. 1600 (Fig. 1.2). While in the early sixteenth century, Ottoman costume was still considered foreign, by the seventeenth century its accommodated form became a conventional expression of 'Polishness', 'Lithuanianness', 'Ruthenianness', and even—in some cases—'Prusianness'. The growing penchant among the nobility for Ottomanesque dress provided a shared sartorial practice that visually marked Polish-Lithuanian nobility as a connected society.

Ottomanesque fashions first reached Poland via Hungary in the first half of the sixteenth century, then spreading to all other lands of the political union.[137] Historians emphasise the existence of trade routes with the Islamic east that ran across Poland-Lithuania as one of the

[135] Urszula Augustyniak, *Historia Polski, 1572–1795* (Warsaw: PWN, 2008), 256.

[136] Krzysztof Łazarski, 'Freedom, State and "National Unity" in Lord Acton's Thought', in *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth: Poland–Lithuania in Context, 1550–1772*, ed. Karin Friedrich and Barbara M. Pendzich (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 269.

[137] Irena Turnau, *History of Dress in Central and Eastern Europe from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Warsaw: Institute of the History of Material Culture, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1991), 71; Gutkowska-Rychlewska, *Historia ubiorów*, 395.

reasons for this adaptation.[138] The Armenian community in the country's southeast were go-betweens in commerce with the Middle East.[139] Warfare with the Ottoman and Tatar armies sometimes resulted in war booty, further familiarising Polish-Lithuanian nobility with Ottoman fashions.[140] Other historians insist that the adaptation of Ottoman costume landed on a fertile soil in Poland since before the appropriation of Renaissance dress, the tunic had been the most common Polish costume for men.[141] Yet it must be noted that in the first half of the sixteenth century, Ottomasque costume was still considered foreign. Catholic cleric Stanisław Orzechowski (1513–1566) penned an utterly negative picture of Turkish costume in a pamphlet, which calls for a cruscade against the Ottomans (1544 in Latin; 1590 in Polish):

> Consider their costume; how cruel, how coarse, how intimidating: head shaved … lips inhuman … and very stupid; not to mention the effeminate character of their costume, long down to the ankle; a Turk covers his entire body not to reveal a body part that might be inhuman.[142]

Orzechowski's description brings to mind the costume that would eventually become a conventional attire in Poland-Lithuania a few decades later. The antagonistic and derogatory

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[138] Roman Rybarski, *Handel i polityka handlowa Polski w XVI stuleciu*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: PWN, 1958), 179; Beata Biedrońska-Słota, *Polski ubiór narodowy zwany kontuszowym: dzieje i przemiany opracowane na podstawie zachowanych ubiorów zabytkowych i ich części oraz w świetle źródeł ikonograficznych i literackich* (Cracow: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2005), 86; Beata Biedrońska-Słota, "Wpływ Sztuki Orientalnej na Sztuke Polską w Okresie Sarmatyzmu," in *Portret Typu Sarmackiego W Wieku XVII W Polsce, Czechach, Na Słowacji I Na Węgrzech*, ed. Ewa Zawadzka (Cracow: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 1985), 189.

[139] Eleonora Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews in Medieval Lvov: Their Role in Oriental Trade 1400-1600," *Cahiers du nonde russe et soviétique* 20, no. 3/4 (1979): 345–88; Piotr Kondraciuk, "Sztuka ormiańska w Zamościu," in *Ars armeniaca: Sztuka ormiańska ze zbiorów polskich i ukraińskich* (Zamość: Muzeum Zamojskie, 2010), 11–25.

[140] Selmin Kangal and Bartłomiej Świetlik, eds., *War and peace: Ottoman-Polish relations in the 15th-19th centuries* (Istanbul: Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, 1999).

[141] Biedrońska-Słota, *Polski ubiór narodowy zwany kontuszowym*, 49–65; Gutkowska-Rychlewska, *Historia ubiorów*, 290–306.

[142] 'Wspomnijcie sobie co tam … za ubiór; jako jest srogi i gruby, jako groźny: głowa ogolona … usta nie człowiecze … i bardzo głupie; nadto ubiór zniewieściały, długi aż po kostki, którym okrywa ciało wszystko swoje, by się snać która część ciała nie okazała bydź człowiecza.' Stanisław Orzechowski, *Mowy (Turcyki)* (Sanok: K. Turowski, 1855), 12.

language suggests, however, that in the 1540s, Ottoman dress was considered a barbaric oddity.

Two decades later, many still found Ottomanesque costume too foreign and thus inappropriate for Polish-Lithuanian nobility. For example, in the 1566 Polish-language adaptation of Baldassare Castigliano's *Il Cortegiano*, *Dworzanin polski* ('The Polish Courtier'), the humanist Łukasz Górnicki worries about a disorienting coexistence of too many fashions:

> Today, there are so many different costumes in our country that it is hard to count them. Some like their clothes Italian, others like them Spanish, yet others prefer the Brunswick-style dress, or Hussar-style [Hungarian?], both the old and new fashions, either Cossack or Turkish; and there are still others that I cannot even name.[143]

Górnicki asserts that none of these fashions predominated in the mid-sixteenth century, but an underlying issue is that traditional Polish dress was falling out of fashion. Although Górnicki is clearly troubled by the surrender of a local tradition, he cannot specify what this old Polish fashion was actually like:

> We Poles do not have our own costume, but I guess it must have existed before, though it later became unappealing to us when we gave in for novelties.[144]

The danger of this 'giving in' was, according to Górnicki, that Poles might fall prey to the groups whose customs they adopted. While he frets about sartorial appropriation in general, he is particularly wary of Ottoman influence:

> The Hungarians lost their state when they took on Turkish costume. Only God can know what harm the multitude of costume in our Poland could bring about. If all those nations whose dress

[143] '[D]ziś u nas tak wiele jest strojów, iż im liczby nie masz. To po włosku, to po iszpańsku, po brunszwicku, po usarsku, dwojako, staro i nowo, po kozacku, po turecku drudzy: i drugie stroje są, których ja nie znam zaprawdę.' Łukasz Górnicki, *Dworzanin Polski*, Wirtualna Biblioteka Literatury Polskiej (Gdańsk: NASK, 2003), 76.

[144] 'My Polacy nie mamy swego własnego ubioru; acz podobno musiał być pirwej, ale nam omierzł, jakeśmy sie nowinek chycili.' Ibid.

we wear were to attack Poland, little would remain of our country. We must then pray to God so that our people put an end to their fancy of foreign costume.[145]

Górnicki warns the gentry that if they acquire too strong an inclination for Turkish garments, they might end up under the Ottoman yoke, just like the Hungarians did in 1526. He thus associates costume with a way of life. Criticism of Ottoman dress is here a symptom of a wider distrust for foreign cultures, and a longing for the simpler, more 'Polish' ways. But even Górnicki himself can only speak of these older 'Polish' ways in the hypothetical. From this description emerges nostalgia for sartorial uniformity, one that likely never existed.

It was not only Górnicki who recounted the multitude of costume in sixteenth-century Poland-Lithuania. In a report sent to Pope Pius IV in 1560, nuncio Bernardo Bongiovanni notes that King Sigismund II Augustus Jagiellon switched between Hungarian and Italian fashions.[146] This remark implies that the king might have felt the pressure to perform publicly in Ottomanesque costume to appeal to Polish nobles. Eight years later, nuncio Giulio Ruggieri wrote a report from his sojourn in Poland for Pope Pius V, in which he states that the nobles 'like to dress sumptuously, particularly in Hungarian costume, but they sometimes wear Italian clothes as well'.[147] The Spanish lawyer and poet, Pedro Ruiz de Moros, lived in Poland, and manifested this recognition for sartorial multitude in a particularly evocative manner:

Germans, Greeks, Italians, or Spaniards – from the Phoenician Cádiz
To the borders of India – you will recognise them everywhere

[145] 'Węgrzy, gdy się tureckich strojów jęli, zginęli. I w Polszcze u nas ta rozliczność strojów, wie to Bóg, jeśli co dobrego przyniesie. A mieliby wszyscy ci Polskę szarpać, których strojów używamy, niewiem jakoby jej co zostało. Przeto Pana Boga trzeba prosić, aby, jako różne stroje, tak też i dziwne dumy w ludziech naszych ustały.' Ibid., 77.

[146] Jan Gintel, ed., *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce: Relacje i opinie*, vol. 1 (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 123.

[147] Giulio Ruggieri, "Relacya o stanie Polski złożona Papieżowi Piusowi V przez Julliusza Ruggieri, nuncyusza jego u dworu Króla Zygmunta Augusta roku 1568," in *Relacye nuncyuszów apostolskich i innych osób o Polsce od roku 1548 do 1690*, trans. Erazm Rykaczewski, vol. 1 (Poznań: Księgarnia B. Behra, 1864), 170.

By their uniform, relevant national dress,
Only Poles wear clothes of such different fashions.[148]

Ottomanesque fashions began gaining momentum in the second half of the sixteenth century. As a telling symptom of the shift, the Hungarian-born King Stephen Báthory (r. 1576–1586) was himself an enthusiast of the eastern-inspired dress, and wore it daily.[149] In a portrait painted in 1583 by the court painter Martin Kober (Fig. 1.7), Báthory appears in a costume that exemplifies his preference for Ottomanesque fashions. Báthory dons a red cloak (*delia*) underneath which he wears a patterned silk tunic (*żupan*) of which only sleeves are visible. Narrow trousers, yellow boots, black fur collar and a fur-trimmed round hat (*magierka*), which is adorned with a golden pin with feathers (*szkofia*) completes the outfit. This dress is clearly reminiscent of Ottoman fashions. Some historians even read the napkin, which the king holds in his left hand, as an attribute of royal sovereignty that was adapted from the Ottoman custom where the napkin (*ulatu*, or *savluk*) stood as the symbol of sultan's dignity and power.[150]

Versions of Báthory's portrait circulated across the country in painted and printed copies: a movement that coincided both with a growing demand for portraits among noble citizenry and with the increasing popularity of Ottomasque fashions.[151] Báthory's preference for the *żupan* and *delia* over the doublet and hose gave the Ottomanesque dress the royal stamp of appropriateness. By 1600, even such magnates as Sebastian Lubomirski found it necessary to wear this new kind of dress (Fig. 1.2).

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[148] 'Niemiec, Grek, Włoch czy Hiszpan—od Kadyksu Tyryjczyków / Aż po Indów granice—wszędzie ich rozpoznasz / Po jednolitym, stosownym narodowym stroju, / Tylko Polak nosi szaty o tak różnym kroju.' In Jacek Żukowski, "W kapeluszu i w delii, czyli ewenement stroju mieszanego w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej," *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 57, no. 1 (2009): 35.

[149] Gutkowska-Rychlewska, *Historia ubiorów*, 400.

[150] Zdzisław Żygulski Jr., 'Akcenty Tureckie W Stroju Batorego', *Folia Historiae Artium* 24 (1988): 62–63.

[151] Mieczysław Zlat, *Renesans i manieryzm*, Sztuka polska 3 (Warsaw: Arkady, 2008), 245.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, Ottomaneqsue costume seems to have prevailed. Márton Szepsi Csombor, an early seventeenth-century Hungarian traveller to Poland-Lithuania, was quite surprised to see that Polish fashions no longer differed from Hungarian dress. He proclaimed that during his last visit to the country the contrast between the Polish and the Hungarian attire had been easy to notice, but now both peoples were dressed in a similar manner: 'Polish male garments once differed from the Hungarian; today one can only see a few differences, for both parts delight in Turkish dress'.[152] Pietro Duodo, Venetian envoy to the court of King Sigismund III (r. 1587–1632), made a similar observation in a speech that he delivered to the Venetian Senate in 1592: 'Poles have their own costume similar to the Hungarian; they live abundantly, but always carry arms'.[153] Duodo thus breaks with the older rhetoric of sartorial multitude in Poland, claiming instead that there was a costume that distinguished Polish nobility from all other nations.

This shift to a single discernible costume that appealed to most nobles is telling. While a sense of common political citizenship and a belief in a common history gave rise to this self-identification in the first place, costume functioned as a visual symptom and an amplifying medium for the existence of a Polish-Lithuanian political nation.[154] by the seventeenth century, Poles, Lithuanians, Prussians and Ruthenians began to think of themselves as members of a larger national community. The question of what is 'Polish-Lithuanian' identity, let alone the question of whether such an identity ever existed, is a matter of debate.[155] However, historians of

[152] Márton Szepsi Csombor, *Podróż po Polsce*, trans. Jan Ślaski (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1961), 11.

[153] In Gintel, *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce*, 1971, 1:184.

[154] Przemysław Mrozowski, "Ubiór jako wyraz świadomości narodowej szlachty polskiej w XVI-XVIII wieku," in *Ubiory w Polsce*, ed. Anna Sieradzka (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki, 1992), 19–27.

[155] See Andrzej Sulima Kamiński, *Historia Rzeczypospolitej Wielu Narodów 1505–1795: Obywatele, ich państwa, społeczeństwo, kultura* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000); Janusz Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka w Polsce: Rozkwit—upadek—relikty* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1998), 87–104.

Poland-Lithuania agree that the process of Ottomanising native dress went hand in hand with the growing conviction that the Commonwealth's gentry and high nobility descended from the ancient Sarmatians.[156] The crucial aspect of this identity was built upon difference from other nations, which were also identified by costume.

Perhaps the final building block of creating this shared self-identification was the reign of the unpopular Vasa family (1587-1668) who unlike their predecessor Báthory preferred western European fashions in their daily lives. Yet in the mixed-form system of government (*forma mixta*) adopted in the Commonwealth, where monarchic, aristocratic and popular elements shared sovereignty, the monarch lacked both the political and economic capital of his absolutist counterparts elsewhere in Europe to turn the royal court into a national centre of cultural gravity. Quite the opposite; the gentry publicly expressed their aversion to the Vasas's embracement of pan-European elite culture, which included the monarchs' lack of enthusiasm for Ottomanesque dress. This animosity had a broader context. The gentry were fearful of the introduction of monarchical absolutism by the Vasas, since this political system was associated with the Hapsburgs, the Vasas' greater international allies. This was anathema to a political system where the monarch's influence was restrained by the mechanisms of constitutional checks and balances held by the gentry.[157]

In this context, the Spanish, Italian, German, and later French fashions, all espoused by the Vasas and their supporters, were a catalyst in a much larger struggle: the gentry's fears of the introduction of a Habsburg-style absolutism and the Vasas continuous retorts to such accusations. In such inimical circumstances, Ottomanseque costume acquired political

[156] Augustyniak, *Historia Polski, 1572–1795*, 360–363.

[157] Karin Friedrich, 'Poland-Lithuania', in *European Political Thought 1450–1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy*, ed. Howell A. Lloyd, Glenn Burgess, and Simon Hodson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 208–43.

connotations in support of parliamentary sovereignty.[158] Adding to this political landscape, a number of noblemen, particularly among so-called 'magnate' strata who controlled local politics, still favoured western European dress in the seventeenth century. There are surviving portraits in which members of the Denhoff, Radziwiłł (Radvila) and Zasławski-Ostrogski noble families, among others, don Spanish, Italian or French fashions. The same men, however, can be seen in 'native' dress in other portraits, suggesting that public appearance in Polish-Lithuanian costume was an essential feature of building political capital and civic trust.[159]

The Vasas were often reprimanded by the gentry for wearing foreign dress. As an example, an anonymous pamphleteer wrote a libel titled *The War Between Shaven Head and Pointed Beard* ('Wojna Czupryny z Pontą', 1607), in which Sigismund III is metaphorically reduced to his Spanish-style pointed beard and costume, while *żupan* and the shaven head with a tuft of hair left atop act as a synecdoche for the nobility. Shaven Head laments Pointed Beard's disrespect for local fashions:

> … I nurse a grudge against Pointed Beard
> That he promotes foreign hairstyles
> He favours doublet over the *żupan*
> And deems our *delurka* and *delia* inferior[160]

This pamphlet was written during the Zebrzydowski Rebellion (1606–1608), an armed revolt against the king. Having used their legal right to revolt against the king, who in their view

[158] Stefania Ochmann-Staniszewska, *Dynastia Wazów w Polsce* (Warsaw: PWN, 2006), 263.

[159] For this argument, see Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, 146–53.

[160] '… To mnie do Ponty boli / Że strzyżą obcą tu wnosić woli / Chcąc, żeby habit miał nad żupany / Delurki a płaszcz za swoje many.' In Jan Czubek, ed., *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego, 1606–1608*, vol. 1 (Cracow: Akademia Umiejętności, 1916), 284.

had impinged on the constitutional freedoms of the Commonwealth,[161] the confederated members of the Zebrzydowski Rebellion resorted to libel as a means of attracting support for their cause. In this critique, the monarch's character was deemed unfit for the governance of Poland-Lithuania due to his doubtful allegiance to his adopted country. Ottomanesque costume thus could imply resistance to royal politics and absolutist ambitions.

Critiques of the Vasas' sartorial preferences were recurrent. Even the panegyrist of King Ladislaus IV (r. 1632–1648), Samuel Twardowski (1600–1661), complained about the king's penchant for foreign dress: 'Our men will not be invited to become a courtier. Only those qualify who wear French or Italian clothes'.[162] Gentleman-diarist Jan Chryzostom Pasek (1636–1701) accused Ladislaus's half-brother, King John Casimir (r. 1648–1668), of the same offense. An entry from 1649 recounts: 'Before the King left Lviv, he had taken off German costume, which he had fancied since childhood, and put on Polish dress in order to gain favours from Poles. Everyone liked the gesture, but they wished that the king gave in not merely to our costume, but also to our customs'.[163] This mistrust of the Vasas' cultural preferences is germane because it was seen as a potential counterpart to their lack of allegiance for the kind of politics that was favourable to the gentry's rights. Various *sejm* minutes have recorded unsolicited advice thrown at all Vasas to wear Polish-Lithuanian dress.[164] The Vasas often ignored it, but on the most public occasions they conformed.

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[161] Edward Opaliński, 'Civic Humanism and Republican Citizenship in the Polish Renaissance', in *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, ed. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 165.

[162] 'I nikt się do prezentu dworskiego nie zgodzi / Tylko kto po francusku, kto po włosku chodzi.' In Czesław Lechicki, *Mecenat Zygmunta III i życie umysłowe na jego dworze* (Warsaw: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1932), 169.

[163] Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki, ed., *Pamiętniki do panowania Zygmunta III, Władysława IV i Jana Kazimierza*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: S. Orgelbrand, 1846), 100.

[164] Irena Turnau, *Ubiór narodowy w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Semper, 1991), 135.

A painting by Tommaso Dollabella (Fig. 1.8) depicts the public tribute offered to Polish-Lithuanian *sejm* by the captured Muscovite Tsar Vasili Shuisky and his brothers. This event took place in Warsaw in 1611. Sigismund III sits on the throne in the centre. He receives the Muscovites on behalf of the Commonwealth, dressed in pink silk *żupan*, fur-trimmed *delia*, and with a *kalpak* hat on his head. To his left sits Prince Ladislaus who wears similar dress to his father. Most men gathered in the room are *sejm* deputies and senators who are seen in different variations of the costume donned by the royals. The only exceptions are the senator-bishops who wear the robes of Catholic clerics. Painted in the aftermath of the Polish-Lithuanian occupation of Moscow in 1605–06, the painting is a microcosm of the victorious state and its political representation, the *sejm*. Sartorially uniform, this is how the political nation wanted to be seen by the world: unanimous in their political allegiance and unified in cultural practice. In Poland-Lithuania, as elsewhere in Europe, costume was inseparably linked to social rules and expectations, for people of all strata read their dress, and the dress of others, as markers of social identity; costume was synonymous with custom.[165] The exterior of the body was precisely where the identity of an individual or the nation was located. Effectively, the clothing one wore on the surface of the body made the person appear as a local, or a foreigner.[166] Since early modern identity was expressed by surface appearances, there was always a danger that this could be counterfeited, as in the theatre.[167] Although the Vasas wear Polish costume in this 1611 painting, the gentry—as we have seen—continued making complaints about their preference for western

[165] Anne Rosalind Jones, 'Habits, Holdings, Heterologies. Populations in Print in a 1562 Costume Book', *Yale French Studies*, no. 110 (2006): 94; Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 102.

[166] Daniel Defert, a historian of anthropology was among the first to suggest that costume books were proto-ethnologies. Daniel Defert, "Un genre ethnographique profane au XVIe siècle: Les livres d'habits (Essai d'ethno-iconographie)," in *Histoires de L'anthopologie (XVIe-XIXe Siècles)*, ed. Britta Rupp-Eisenreich (Paris: Klincksieck, 1984), 25–41.

[167] Michael Gaudio, 'The Truth in Clothing: The Costume Studies of John White and Lucas de Heere', in *European Visions: American Voices*, ed. Kim Sloan (London: British Museum Press, 2009), 26.

European fashions.

'Native' dress acquired political cachet in Poland-Lithuania not only because it played a role in organising opposition to the Vasa monarchs, but also because it helped the gentry to imagine themselves as sharing something in common despite differences that were bound to arise in a country that after Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire was third biggest in Europe. A seventeenth-century panel depicting a range of Polish-Lithuanian costumes, today at the National Museum in Poznań (Fig. 1.9), is a visual testimony to the nobility's growing sense of shared identity. Although they did not personally know all their fellow citizens, Polish-Lithuanian nobility expressed their imagined commonalities through the most personal of things: clothing. Costume textured and contoured the social body, marking the wearer as akin to other wearers.[168] The term 'habit' often figures in early modern costume books: a genre that supplied both pictorial and narrative visualisations of the costume worn by the world's various peoples. As such, 'habit' conflates dress, culture and morals, referring to both external appearances and habitual practice, both costume and custom.[169] The strategy of marking differences and similarities through a mixture of categories: nation, region, religion, lineage, genealogy, mode of dress and living, all conflated in the word *habit*.[170] Costume thus functioned as a threshold of collective memory; a collection of historical imaginaries that gained their credibility by comparisons to one's own body and the garments covering it. Dress created an image, a medium of common understanding that became the vehicle for memory.[171] Assembled from fragments

[168] Margreta De Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass, eds., 'Introduction', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

[169] Jones, 'Habits, Holdings, Heterologies. Populations in Print in a 1562 Costume Book', 94.

[170] Valerie Traub, 'Mapping the Global Body', in *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England,* ed. Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 59.

and representations, Polish-Lithuanian Ottomanesque dress was a simulacrum of historical fabric. As historian of collective memory Pierre Nora has demonstrated, the process of remembering and constructing a shared heritage is often selective, virtual, inventive, and embodied.[172] Polish-Lithuanian costume represented an imagined community inasmuch as it presented it.

The Poznań panel (Fig. 1.9) presents a selection of Polish-Lithuanian costumes. Four men in the highest register wear *żupan*s and *delia*s, marking them as united in their preference for long robes and in their difference from most other Europeans who preferred shorter garments. Women's bodies, too, are covered almost in their entirety, in contrast with the more revealing contemporaneous costume of Italian and French women. The panel also foregrounds the importance of military prowess in a country where each nobleman was expected to be an accomplished soldier and rider. All men carry a sword, while the man who stands second to the left in the upper register also holds a general's staff. The remaining three men are seen in full military equipment. The horses in the lower register complete the picture of the nation's bellicosity. The painting thus conveys cultural traits that were the self-proclaimed pride of the nobility. Equally important, the Poznań panel also conveys a sense of continuity between the full figures depicted in the painting and their purported ancestors. The oval portraits within the painting, for instance, recall a gallery of ancestors. As they depict figures who wear a similar type of Ottomanesque costume to the characters in the panel painting these images-within-the-image suggest a sense of longer history for Polish-Lithuanian dress. This is an image of nationhood expressed in its variety and multitude, but also in its alleged timelessness.

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[171] On memory and history, see Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 44–55.

[172] Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, trans. Mary Seidman Trouille, 1 edition, vol. 1: The State (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), vii–xxii.

Orientalisation or Europeanisation?

The question of how to reconcile the Ottomanesque form of Polish-Lithuanian costume with its purported nativeness has long puzzled scholars. Art historians have traditionally explained the partial similarity of Polish-Lithuanian costume with that of the Ottoman Empire by claiming that the belief in the Sarmatian origin of the political nation gave the Commonwealth citizens a sense of their eastern origin. This claim first gained currency in the 1947 book *Genealogia sarmatyzmu* ('Genealogy of sarmatism') by art historian Tadeusz Mańkowski. In this important work, the author makes a connection between Polish-Lithuanian adaptation of Ottoman fashions and the staging of the Commonwealth as continuation of the European Sarmatia. He goes as far as to assert that Poles 'looked to the [Islamic] east as the cradle of their nation'.[173] This belief, which according to Mańkowski resulted in the Orientalisation of Polish dress and material culture, formed the character of local self-identification, which in many respects differed from other European contexts. Seeking reasons for this cultural exceptionalism in the nobility's self-labelling as descendants of the ancient Sarmatians, Mańkowski situated it under the term 'Sarmatism'. To this day, many art historians follow Mańkowski's theorisation, claiming that the gentry's culture was rooted in their imagining eastern origins.[174] Myriads of books and articles have since been written on 'Sarmatian culture',[175] 'Sarmatian art',[176] 'Sarmatian portraiture',[177] 'Sarmatian ideology'[178] and many other things 'Sarmatian'.[179]

[173] Mańkowski, *Genealogia sarmatyzmu*, 97.

[174] For recent work, see Koutny-Jones, 'Echoes of the East: Glimpses of the Orient in British and Polish-Lithuanian Portraiture of the Eighteenth Century', 408–10.

[175] Tadeusz Chrzanowski, *Wędrówki po Sarmacji europejskiej: Eseje o sztuce i kulturze staropolskiej* (Cracow: Znak, 1988); Janusz Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka w Polsce: rozkwit - upadek - relikty* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1998), 132–52.

[176] Mariusz Karpowicz, *Sztuka oświeconego sarmatyzmu: Antykizacja i klasycyzacja w środowisku warszawskim czasów Jana III*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: PWN, 1986).

Mańkowski's argument, however, makes many assumptions that find no confirmation in historical sources. Presupposing that early modern Poles and Lithuanians had our modern understanding of the ancient Sarmatians as an Iranian people,[180] Mańkowski in fact anachronistically applied the philological and archaeological knowledge of his own day to Polish-Lithuanian epistemologies. Although according to Herodotus and Strabo, Sarmatians inhabited the Pontic Steppe and were related to Scythians,[181] and while Tacitus compares them to Persians,[182] no early modern Polish-Lithuanian source explicitly states the Iranian extraction of these peoples, as Mańkowski would have it. These historical documents are adamant that Poles, and indeed the ancient Sarmatians, were Slavs.

All the key Polish-Lithuanian writers—whose importance for popularising the Sarmatian narrative we have seen above—emphasise the Poles' long-term presence in Sarmatia back to the Roman times and beyond. Miechowita, for example, asserts in the *Chronica Polonorum* of 1519 that Poles have always inhabited the same lands: 'Poles and all other Slavs, have been living in this kingdom making their permanent home here, and nowhere else.'[183] Martin Kromer in

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[177] Tadeusz Dobrowolski, "Cztery style portretu 'sarmackego,'" *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* 45 (1962): 83–85.

[178] Janusz Tazbir, 'Polish National Consciousness in the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10, no. 3/4 (1986): 318.

[179] Cynarski, 'Sarmatyzm - ideologia i styl życia', in *Polska XVII wieku: państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura*, ed. Janusz Tazbir (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1969), 220–43; Władysław Tomkiewicz, 'W Kręgu Kultury Sarmatyzmu', *Kultura* 30 (1966); Maria Bogucka, *The Lost World of the 'Sarmatians': Custom as the Regulator of Polish Social Life in Early Modern Times* (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1996); *Decorum życia Sarmatów w XVII i XVIII wieku: Katalog pokazu sztuki zdobniczej ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe, 1980).

[180] For a modern account, see Tadeusz Sulimirski, *The Sarmatians* (Thames and Hudson, 1970).

[181] Herodotus, *Histories*, ed. Carolyn Dewald, trans. Robin Waterfileld (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.110–117; Strabo, *Geography*, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, vol. 7 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.17.

[182] Tacitus, *La Germanie*, trans. Jacques Perret (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1983), chap. 17.

[183] 'Poloni … et omnia genera slavorum, post diluvium in hanc aetatem in suis sedibus et connatis regnis permanent, et non aliunde supervenerunt.' Quoted in Ulewicz, *Sarmacja*, 59.

Polonia (1577) is of a similar opinion: 'Poles are a Slavic and Sarmatian people. Having left Sarmatia and passed the Vistula, they settled those places in Germania that had been previously inhabited by the Veneti and Vandals.'[184] Kromer, of course, needs to make this recursion to justify the more westward reach of his Sarmatia, modelled on Poland-Lithuania, than that of Tacitus for whom these lands were parts of Germania. The author of the often re-issued Polish-language *Kronika Swiata* ('World Chronicle', 1550), Marcin Bielski, dates the presence of Sarmatians in Polish-Lithuanian lands to a far more distant past, tracing their origins to one of the sons of Noah: '[Japheth] our Christian [sic!] father … came to this northern country in Europe after the Deluge and multiplied his offspring by the Lord's will.'[185] The *Kronika polska* (1582) of Maciej Stryjkowski maintains this account, qualifying that the Lithuanian nobility were descendants of the Roman nobleman Palemon and his 500 companions who settled in Lithuania, a Sarmatian land, and gradually adopted the Sarmatian customs and language.[186] Indeed, at no point did early modern Poles identify themselves with any Middle Eastern people.[187]

More recently, art and cultural historians have become warier of treating the adaptation of Ottoman fashions in Poland-Lithuania as 'Orientalisation'. The term serves no useful function in the analysis of Polish-Lithuanian realities, particularly as it implies a binary division between the

[184] Kromer, *Polska*, 15.

[185] 'ociec nasz krześcijański … w ten tu kraj północny przyszedł do Europy po potopie I rozmnożył potomstwo swoje według Pańskiej wolej …' Bielski Marcin, *Kronika Polska* (Cracow, 1597), 154v.

[186] Maciej Stryjkowski, *Kronika polska, litewska, zmodźka, y wszystkiej Rusi Kijowskiej* ... (Königsberg, 1582), 74.

[187] Even the phantasmal Wojciech Dembołęcki, a Dominican who conflates ancient Poles with Scythians, reduces the Polish past into the necessary ethnographic prelude for the Christian era. In his account, the eastern past has no bearing on the presence, however, and is implied only to deduce Poles' alleged origin from Seth (whom Dębołęcki calls 'Scyth'), the third son of Adam and Eve, and thus to claim that Polish was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. See Wojciech Dembołęcki, *Wywod iedynowłasnego panstwa swiata, w ktorym pokázuie X.W. Debolecki ... ze nastárodawnieysze w Europie Krolestwo Polskie, lubo Scythyckie ... y ... ze język słowieński pierwotny jest ná świećie.* (Warsaw: J. Rossowski, 1633), 27–45.

'East' and 'West', which only ensued with the rise of modern colonialism.[188] Avoiding this trap, art historian Adam Jasienski has recently proposed the term 'Ottomanisation' to describe the formal similarity of Polish-Lithuanian dress with that of the Ottoman Empire.[189] Jasienski's term has an obvious advantage: while foregrounding the local context for appropriation, it embraces the process of material self-definition of Poles and Lithuanians without making forays into cultural essentialism. Acknowledging Jasienski's methodological corrective to the traditionally 'Orient'-centred discussions of Polish-Lithuanian hybridity, I would like to push his solution still further.

In my view, by adapting Ottomanesque dress, the Commonwealth citizens and their tribunes were responding to their country's peripheral position in Europe. They embraced a costume that was different from most other European sartorial codes, and in so doing they fashioned themselves as a unique nation that was not culturally dependent on any major European centre. This was an appeal for parity with the main European hubs of culture. The Sarmatian narrative only strengthened Polish-Lithuanian claims, since—as we have seen—Sarmatia was described by Polish-Lithuanian historians as a European land whose history was intimately connected with that of classical Mediterranean societies. In this respect, the 'Ottomanisation' of Polish-Lithuanian dress could be read as its Europeanisation.

Eulogising their unique costume, Poles often remarked on the superiority of their habits, which in their view stood in stark contrast with the allegedly corrupt lifestyle conveyed by other European fashions. The wealthy landowner, politician and poet Krzysztof Opaliński (1611–1655), insisted that foreign customs be kept away from Polish-Lithuanian youth to prevent the

[188] See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1991), 1–4.

[189] Jasienski, 'A Savage Magnificence', 176.

country's moral decline. In the anonymously published *Satires* (1650), he advises against sending noble offspring on a Grand Tour to France, which had become the dominant cultural centre in Europe:

> He learned to speak French, but also to walk
> And dress *alamode*, and do everything in French
> … Now Poland is vulgar to him, and everything about it stinks.
> He boasts of France, its ladies, and ballets.
> Yet he knows nothing but lies and false appearances;
> He always looks in the mirror like an ape
> Prettying up, and shaving as often as twice a day.[190]

Opaliński is clearly disgruntled about the prospect of French fashions taking root in the Commonwealth. He deems them vain, superfluous and completely at odds with Polish-Lithuanian moral and social order. Unsurprisingly for a nobleman raised in an environment where masculinity was judged on chivalric prowess, he recommends that instead of going on a Grand Tour, a young nobleman should receive his polishing by serving in the army.[191] Polish-Lithuanian costume, which did not constrict body movement and was therefore ideal for horse-riding, thus better fitted into the Commonwealth nobility's self-image.

A cross-dressing incident that French official Monsieur Payen included in the second edition of his *Voyages* (Paris, 1667) illustrates how pervasive this self-image was. Payen describes a binge-drinking feast he experienced in Danzig, which resulted in an unexpected offer. An intoxicated Polish gentleman, who in a bout of alcoholic excess grew very fond of the Frenchman, offered Payen his own daughter as a wife, together with ten thousand livres and two

[190] 'Nauczył dyszkurować; więc i *alamode* / Chodzić, stroić, i wszytko czynić po francusku. / … Już mu i Polska śmierdzi, i wszystko w niej gani. / O Francyi powiada, o damach, baletach. / Nic nie umie tylko łgać, a udawać rzeczy; / W zwierciadle ustawicznie ni tam małpa jaka / Muszcze się, goli brodę i dwa razy o dzień.' Krzysztof Opaliński, *Satyry* (Cracow, 1884), 7.

[191] Ibid., 9.

hundred serfs. The Polish gentleman then proclaimed Payen a Pole, and began dressing him accordingly:

> He began by putting on my head his hat, and then, carried by fantasy, continued dressing me from top to bottom. He took off his coat, which was made of scarlet, with golden pins and fitted with martens, and put it on my clothes: He even made me wear his boots, and then detached his sabre from his side, made me kiss its hilt, and told me that it guarded the honour of his country; that this sabre defended more than one royal throne; that it was a buster to Ottoman power, and that all Poland owed it its freedom; he then buckled it to my side.[192]

Likely an exaggeration, Payen's narrative nonetheless conveys a clear correlation between costume and custom. The Polish nobleman in the story is convinced that Payen can only become a Pole if he accepts the sartorial codes of the Commonwealth. Costume appears here as the nation's shield and a guardian of Polish-Lithuanian values. Two crucial characteristics of a Polish-Lithuanian nobleman are conveyed in this short description: the pursuit of chivalric prowess and the country's defence against the Ottomans. If Polish-Lithuanian costume could encapsulate these associations, it is because it was seen as a material manifestation of the political nation, a means of self-identification mired in strategic essentialism and nativism.

A pattern emerges here: the distinctiveness of this costume, together with assertions of Sarmatian origins, were mobilized to define Poland-Lithuania as a coherent entity. The male gentry were proud of their unique customs, and associated the look and fit of their costume with

[192] '… il commença à me coëffer de son bonnet; & puis la phantaisie luy pregnant de m'habiller de pied en cap, il se dépoüilla de sa premiere robbe, qui estoit d'écarlate, avec des agraffes d'argent, & fourrée de Martres, & m'en reuestit par dessus mes habits: Il me fit mesme chausser ses brodequins. En suite de cela il tira son sabre de son costé; & apres m'en avoir fait baiser avec respect la garde, me dit que c'estoit là l'honneur de son pays; que ce sabre avoit soûtenu plus d'une fois le Trosne de son Roy; qu'il avoit fait trembler la puissance Ottomane, & que toute la Pologne luy devoit sa liberté, & me le mit au costé.' Monsieur Payen, *Les voyages de Monsieur Payen: Où sont contenues les descriptions d'Angleterre, de Flandre, de Brabant, d'Holande, de Dennemarc, de Suede, de Pologne, d'Allemagne & d'Italie* (Paris, 1667), 130.

quasi-military forms of sociability. Such framing of Polish-Lithuanian costume corresponded with the re-imagining of the Commonwealth as the 'European Sarmatia' of classical geographers. It helped that this ancient land encompassed roughly the same territory as early modern Poland-Lithuania. Thus, paradoxically, the Ottomanisation of Polish-Lithuanian costume supported the Europeanisation of the country's constructed heritage; its past was allegedly as old and rich as that of the Mediterranean nations and was seemingly recorded by the same venerable classical authorities, who confirmed its unchanged location. The espousal of idiosyncratic dress not only supported a sense of Poland-Lithuania's Sarmatian heritage, but also marked the country's uniqueness from the rest of Christendom.

This was a tactic of turning the Commonwealth's peripheral location in Europe to an advantage. Removal of the unsavoury prospect of marginality motivated differentiation from other European societies in order to equal them in illustriousness and self-worth. This distinction, however, was made within a shared framework of common European (both Classical and Christian) references. The assumption that the Commonwealth continued traditions of European Sarmatia was by no means a self-Orientalising manoeuvre. Rooted in the culture of humanism, this new philological historicism was thus a Polish-Lithuanian variation of pan-European interest in the classical past. Other aspects of the Commonwealth also had classical foundations. For instance, the concept of mixed monarchy practiced in the Commonwealth in fact stemmed directly from Aristotle's *Politics*.[193] Moreover, many Polish-Lithuanian citizens were familiar with the Roman law by practice as they run local courts and attended local assemblies (*sejmiki*)

[193] Tomasz W. Gromelski, 'The Commonwealth and Monarchia Mixta in Polish and English Political Thought in the Later Sixteenth Century', in *Britain and Poland-Lithuania: Contact and Comparison from the Middle Ages to 1795*, ed. Richard Unger (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 175.

and national parliament (*sejm*).[194] Polish-Lithuanian morals and behaviour were often compared with Roman republican virtues, such as the simplicity of customs propagated by Cicero and Seneca.[195] Finally, Poles and Lithuanians considered themselves the bulwark of Christendom, and waged wars against both Tartars and Turks (though often unwillingly) under the slogan of defending Europe against heathen invasion.[196] Despite resembling the Turks on the surface, the Commonwealth's noble citizens did not consciously mimic Ottoman fashions.

Although Poles and Lithuanians saw some similarities between their costume and that of the Ottoman Empire, they claimed no causal relationship between the two sartorial codes. The listing of garments described as 'Turkish' in seventeenth-century inventories suggests that the inhabitants of the Commonwealth made important distinctions between their costume and that of the Ottomans. For example, the post-mortem inventory of Andrzej Firlej, Castellan of Lublin (d. 1661), records 'a Turkish sash embroidered with Turkish silver and gold'.[197] Systematic research of Ottoman costume in Polish-Lithuanian notarial documents remains to be conducted, but historian of costume Beata Biedrońska-Słotowa enumerates a further twelve entries in seventeenth-century wills and inventories, including 'a Turkish *delia*', 'a Turkish *żupan*', 'a Turkish *delurka*', and a broader category, 'Turkish costume'.[198] The qualification of these garments as 'Turkish' despite their presumable similarities with Polish-Lithuanian equivalents—

[194] Karin Friedrich, 'Introduction: Citizenship and Identity in an Early Modern Commonwealth', in *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth: Poland-Lithuania in Context, 1550-1772*, ed. Karin Friedrich and Barbara M. Pendzich (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 5.

[195] Tadeusz Chrzanowski, "Orient i orientalizm w kulturze staropolskiej," in *Orient i orientalizm w sztuce*, ed. Elżbieta Karwowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1986), 68.

[196] See Dan D. Y. Shapira, '"Turkism", Polish Sarmatism and "Jewish Szlachta" Some Reflections on a Cultural Context of the Polish- Lithuanian Karaites', *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, no. 20 (2009): 35–36.

[197] Jan Czubek, "Dwa inwentarze firlejowskie z XVII w.," *Sprawozdania Komisyi do Badania Historyi Sztuki w Polsce* 8, no. 3/4 (1912): 392.

[198] Biedrońska-Słota, *Polski ubiór narodowy zwany kontuszowym*, 86.

the same words were used to describe them—suggests that the Commonwealth nobility consciously distinguished their clothes from Ottoman attire.

An anecdote recounted by Polish diarist Jan Chryzostom Pasek (1636–1701) clearly illustrates this sartorial distinction. Describing the return of the Commonwealth nobility to their homes after the victorious Battle of Khotyn (1673), in which the Polish-Lithuanian army defeated the Ottomans and took booty, Pasek tells a story of a particularly showy young nobleman:

> Approaching his family house, he wanted to greet his father in Turkish costume: he thus dressed in Turkish costume from top to bottom, mounted a camel, and, having made his servants wait in the village, went to the manor house. The elderly father walks down the front yard to see neighbours, while some monster enters through the gate. The old man crosses himself in terror and takes to his heels. The son, seeing his father's fear, chases him shouting: 'Wait, dear man! It's me, your son!' But the father runs away even faster. He then fell ill from trepidation, and soon after died.[199]

The old man's dramatic reaction indicates that he did not recognise his own son, thinking instead that a Turkish warrior was invading his estate. The Commonwealth nobility's alleged affinity with the Ottoman east clearly did not hold up in this instance.

Indeed, the Commonwealth's Ottomanesque costume by no means conveyed a sense of growing connection with the Ottoman Empire. In fact, most textiles used for the production of

[199] 'Przyjeżdżając pod dom, chciał się też ojcu pokazać na powitaniu tureckim strojem: ustroił się w ubiór wszystek turecki [i] zawój, wsiadł na wielbłąda; kazawszy czeladzi zatrzymać się na wsi, pojechał przodem do dwora. Ociec staruszek idzie przez podwórze z laską do jakiegoś gospodarstwa, a owo straszy[d]ło wjeżdża we wrota. Starzec okrutnie uciekać począł, żegnając się. Syn widząc, że się ociec zaląkł, pobieży też za nim, wołając: „Stój, Dobrodzieju: ja to, syn twój!" Ociec tym bardziej w nogi. Potem rozchorował się z przelęknienia i niezadługo potem umarł.' Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Pamiętniki*, ed. Jan Czubek (Cracow: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1929), 185, http://wolnelektury.pl/katalog/lektura/pamietniki.

these clothes were made in Italy or elsewhere in western Europe.[200] Szymon Starowolski (1588–1656), author of the Latin-language description of the Commonwealth, *Polonia* (Cologne, 1632), writes about his country: 'usually, we all use foreign fabrics, mostly German, Flemish, French, English, Spanish and Italian'.[201] Clearly Starowolski highlights affinities with western Europe; the eastern provenance of Polish-Lithuanian costume is overlooked entirely

The practice of sartorial mimicry was thus complex, and the question of who borrowed and who lent it is not that obvious. But for an early modern Pole or Lithuanian, this question was not even worth asking as they looked at their dress through the prism of comforting localness. A point of passage between western Europe and its alleged antithesis the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania was defined as unambiguously European by its inhabitants. Taking up an eastern sartorial model, claiming its local provenance, and displaying its hybridised effect to the west as part of European heritage suggests that the Commonwealth's nobility saw themselves, as in a mirror, reflected geographically and culturally in comparison with western Europe. The Asiatic east was removed from their self-definition; the humanistically-driven Sarmatian narrative aimed to bind Lithuanians, Poles, Prussians and Ruthenians closer to Europe's cultural core, rather than to drive their peripheral country further away from it. Although for Mańkowski Polish-Lithuanian costume registered both sameness and difference, both being like a European, and being like a Turk, early modern Polish-Lithuanian writers saw the costume of their country as comfortingly familiar.[202]

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[200] Adam Manikowski, *Toskańskie przedsiębiorstwo arystokratyczne w XVII wieku: Społeczeństwo elitarnej konsumpcji* (Warsaw: PWN, 1991).

[201] Szymon Starowolski, *Polska albo opisanie Królestwa Polskiego*, trans. Antoni Piskadło (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976), 124.

[202] Michael T Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 129.

Poland-Lithuania and the Limits of Europe

The Commonwealth was often characterized by literate western Europeans as a far-away state replete with cultural idiosyncrasies. This perception corresponded with self-definitions put forward by Polish-Lithuanian writers who, as we have seen, self-consciously defined their country to lie on Europe's eastern periphery. In painting this picture of Polish-Lithuanian liminality, both sides contributed to the early modern idea of Europe as a cultural spectrum rather than a homogenous and unified entity neatly demarcated by self-evident geopolitical boundaries. The question is here: what exactly did 'Europe' mean for an early modern European and how the image of Polishness helped treating the abstraction of 'Europe' as if it had concrete existence?

While the horizons of most Europeans did not extend past their village, city or region, a growing number of educated elite were nonetheless thinking about connections with their counterparts elsewhere in Europe.[203] Until the Protestant Reformation, these connections were conceptualised by the idea of Christendom, or *communitas Christiana*, which encompassed collectively all Christian countries, particularly those accepting the authority of the pope. However, with Christendom divided between Catholics and Protestants, not to mention the previous schism with Eastern Orthodoxy, Christian universalism was an empty slogan. With the spread of Christianity into the Americas and the expansion of the Ottoman state, which by the mid-sixteenth century had incorporated a quarter of formerly Christian lands, the concept of European Christendom begins to break down.[204].

Historians of early modern Europe have traditionally assumed that the continent's self-image was constructed by defining its oppositional others. For example, Stephen Greenblatt

[203] Burke, 'Did Europe Exist Before 1700?', 24.

[204] It was only in the Enlightenment that 'Europe' took over 'Christendom' as the clear and predominant form of European group identity. See Kläger and Bayer, 'Introduction: Early Modern Constructions of Europe', 3.

argued that a 'European practice of representation' of the Americas demarcated commonalities between Europeans.[205] Similarly, the older accounts of European grand-narratives saw the Ottoman Empire as a mirror, or rather a projection surface, of Europe—an idea reminiscent of the main thesis in Edward Said's *Orientalism*.[206] More recent accounts of relations between Christian states and the Ottoman Empire challenge this dualistic outlook, instead foregrounding the porosity of borders, cultural osmosis, instances of conversion and entangled dynamics.[207] Exploring the representations of Polishness adds to this new understanding of early modern Europe as a concept and territory that were perpetually in flux. Images of Polish-Lithuanian costume that circulated across the continent, in particular, highlight that early modern idea of Europe was not built predominantly on opposition to outsiders, but rather on the idea of pluralism and incoherence within the continent's bounds.

The broadsheet *Costumes of the Nations of the World* (Fig. 1.10), etched by the Swiss artist Jost Amman and published in 1577 by the Nuremberg workshop of Georg Mack, both expresses and further reifies this European heterogeneity in graphic terms. Like many other prints produced in Nuremberg, this one was aimed at an international audience. It represents the world's various ethnicities, which are marked by their costumes. The central cartouche clearly explains the purpose of the print: 'Just as the world is divided into four parts: As Asia, Europe,

[205] Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[206] Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*; Said, *Orientalism*.

[207] Wilson, *The World in Venice*; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Palmira Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Africa and India, or, America, so is here each of these parts shown as displaying for the eye the appropriate costume, or clothing.'[208]

European nations have been given the most prominent space in this ensemble, and are depicted in a roundel above Africa, America and Asia. As one could expect from a broadsheet printed in Germany, the central place is given to the various German peoples flanked by 'a German prince' (*ein deischer First*) and 'a German courtier' (*ei teischer Hofman*). To the left in the same register are Italians, and to the right the mercantile peoples of northwest Europe: Dutchmen, Flemings and Englishmen. These are the economically most advanced nations and unsurprisingly are represented as *en par* with Germany. Frenchmen and Spaniards are given place in the second register. Two groups are depicted in the backgrounds, the Greeks on the left, and the Poles, Hungarians and Bohemians represented together on the right (Fig. 1.11).

The oval field depicting Europe is no random selection, but rather a ranking of peoples according to their supposed importance, which of course shows the bias of a Nuremberg workshop. Poles are on the margins of this system, inhabiting a land where seemingly only wooden huts could be built. They are, however, markedly removed from the Muscovites, Turks and Persians, who are slotted into a different graphic plane altogether at the bottom-right, which is clearly marked as 'Asia'. Yet idisyncratic costume still marks Poles as distinct from all other Europeans except Hungarians, and as similar to the Asians in the lower register. One of the Poles gazes at the sun that rises on the horizon: a visual clue that situates this outlying group on the continent's eastern margin. The ambivalence of Polish-Lithuanian costume was clearly not enough to remove the Commonwealth's inhabitants (often homogenised as 'Poles' in western

[208] 'Gleichwie die welt in vier theil ist abgetheilt: Als Asia Europa Affrica und India oder America, / also ist in jedem theyl die Fürnembste Tracht oder Klaidung die für augen gestelt und in diesen vier / Figurn angetzeigt. …'

Europe) away from Europe's purview. The new 'Europe' was a much more pluralistic category than the older notion of 'Christendom'.

John Speed's map of Europe (Fig. 1.12), first published in 1627 in his popular world atlas, *Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World*, reveals a similar inclusivity of the early modern definition of Europe. Mostly produced in Dutch workshops, maps of Europe—as indeed maps of other continents and states—were becoming increasingly popular commodities in the seventeenth century, and circulated widely across the continent. Speeds map is largely based on a map by Willem Jansson Blaeu, Amsterdam-based map maker and publisher who was one of the most successful in the production and marketing of cartographic representations of Europe.[209] Like Amman's broadsheet, Speed's map represents a whole gamut of fashions: English, Spanish, Venetian (presumably standing in for the whole of Italy), French, German, 'Belgian', Polish, Bohemian, Hungarian and Greek; they are depicted on the map's margins. This image is one of variety and difference rather than integrity. In this collection of European nations, the Greek man (Fig. 1.13) wears a tunic and an exuberant turban, appearing similar to the Turks in Amman's broadsheet. Furthermore, while in Amman's print Ottomans were categorised as Asiatic peoples, Speed's map depicts Constantinople together with other important European cities, reminding the viewer that large parts of the Ottoman Empire were actually located in Europe (hence the depiction of Greek costume). The Polish man also appears in a tunic and an exuberant headgear (Fig. 1.14), further opening up Speed's Europe to a variety of material cultures and distinct national customs, some of which appear in sync with the fashions of Asia.

[209] Cornelis Koeman et al., 'Commercial Cartography and Map Production in the Low Countries, 1500–ca. 1672', in *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. David Woodward, vol. 3, The History of Cartography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1325–30.

The textual description of Poland corresponds with its visual ambiguity. Poland (though here—as in other European texts—the entire Commonwealth is covered by this name) is described as a country with a 'wild beginning', but one that became more cultured in recent times.[210] Such temporal demarcation of civility, quite conventional for most European locations in Speed's atlas, is followed by geographical divisions within the country itself. After Ptolemy, the parts west of the river Vistula are called *Polonia Germanica*, and the parts east of it are described as *Polonia Sarmatica*. According to Speed, this separation was an outcome of historical processes, for in the past the Polish-Lithuanian lands had been inhabited by 'Sauromates', a Scythian people. Then came 'the Vandalls', and then 'the Sclavonians', who populated the western half of the vast country. Relationships between the historical inhabitants of the land and the seventeenth-century divisions of Poland-Lithuania are unclear from Speed's text, but for his part the author guides the reader to understand Poles as the descendants of 'Sclavonians' who resided in the western part of the country, rather than the 'Sauromates' in the east. The east-west division in fact plays an important role in Speed's account of Poland-Lithuania by marking a civilizational fault line. The western 'Sclavonian' half was developed, whereas the eastern 'Sarmatian' part is cast as a backward region. To this effect, the *Polonia Germanica* was culturally linked to the Holy Roman Empire. More than that; for Speed the land even politically belonged to Germany in the same manner that Bohemia did. On the other hand, the eastern parts of the country—the *Polonia Sarmatica*—formed a cultural passage to Asia.

This liminal status of the country in Speed's atlas reflects the ambivalent perceptions of the Commonwealth in Europe in general. In England, for instance, there was a sentiment to link this country together with Germany, as news from Poland-Lithuania and Germany were often

[210] Speed, *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World*, 31.

reported in the same pamphlets.[211] On the other end of this spectrum were the tracts emphasising the 'Scythian' past of Poland-Lithuania. In this respect, the country was emphatically equated with the Ottoman-ruled Hungary, and even with Persia and Turkey proper. Speed's *Prospect of the most famous parts of the world* claimed that Hungary had been in the past inhabited by the Hunes, who were of 'Scythian' stock. The Hungarians allegedly spoke the Scythian language, even though they only arrived in east-central Europe around the late ninth century.[212] Although the ethnicity of Hungarians is not mentioned in Speed's atlas, they are nonetheless described as 'ill mannered and worse learned'. The Turks on their end, too, 'carry the marks in their foreheads and limes of Scythians'.[213] But it is the Tartars whose affiliation with the 'Scythian' ethnicity was the most accepted.[214] The land called Tartaria in early modernity had, according to Speed, been called 'Scythia' and 'Sarmatia' in the past. The eastern parts of Poland-Lithuania, identified both as *Polonia Sarmatica* and *Sarmatia Europea*, would have either bordered or encompassed the western confines of Scythia-Tartaria. Poland-Lithuania was thus wedged into a somewhat self-conflicting predicament in western European theorisations.

The ambiguous portrayal of Poland-Lithuania in early modern atlases resonates in the map accompanying the description of this country in Speed's *Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World* (Fig. 1.15). The cartographic representation of the land itself is bordered by the facets portraying human figures clad in local dress. As in other depictions of Poles on map margins, the beholder is compelled to engage with an image, which seemingly lacks integrity. While the representations of the two male figures depict them in long Ottomanesque robes and

[211] Anon. *The Certaine and True News, from all the Parts of Germany and Poland*, London: F. Kingston, 29 October 1621.

[212] Speed, *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World*, 27.

[213] Ibid., 35.

[214] Ibid., 39.

sporting flamboyant moustaches, the images of women do not differ substantially from the portrayals of German females in the same volume. The sense of cultural incoherence is intensified by Speed's choice to merge Poland-Lithuania into the same map with Silesia, whose links with Poland-Lithuania were ecclesiastical in nature, rather than political. But it is also the very position of the 'newe mape of Poland' within Speed's volume that drove beholders to consider this country within the framework of cultural liminality. Poland-Lithuania occupies the space between Hungary and Denmark, on the one hand, and Persia and the Ottoman Empire, on the other. By scanning through the pages of the atlas, the reader was thus induced to locate Poland-Lithuania on the crossroads between west and east. Embarking on such an imaginary journey, the beholder would most likely notice the visual similarities between the Polish-Lithuanian and the Ottoman dress. It is precisely this relational nature of imagining dress and body in early modern ethnographic representations that coded Poland-Lithuania as a liminal space.

Although perceived as inherently native in seventeenth-century Polish-Lithuanian discourses, 'Sarmatian' dress evoked more ambiguous associations in other parts Europe. While unsettling the semantics of Ottoman clothes in the context of their own country, the inhabitants of the Commonwealth could not control how these cultural appropriations were seen elsewhere. Familiar enough and yet curious, Poland-Lithuania provided an image of liminal place located in-between worlds. But rather than acting as a strictly-bound perimeter, the cartographic representations of Poland-Lithuania helped blurring the thresholds of familiarity and difference. They were effectively co-shaping early modern idea of Europe as a pluralistic field that not only tolerated ambiguity but embraced it.

Conclusion: Europe as a Spectrum

What exactly does the notion of Poland-Lithuania as a country bordering with the Ottoman Empire tell us about early modern notion of 'Europe'? Most importantly, my case studies reveal that hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or purity of cultures are untenable.[215] On a practical level, the hybridity of Polish-Lithuanian dress was caused by its liminal location in the contact zone between Europe and the Islamic World. Yet the tacit mimicry of eastern material culture went hand in hand with the purposeful appropriation of classical philology, which enabled the fashioning of Poland-Lithuania as European Sarmatia. For the gentry, asserting a local costume and custom was a way of distinguishing themselves from other European peoples. Simultaneously, the eastern origin of these forms was forgotten, marking local cultural landscapes with contradictions visible only from outside. I have argued here that Poles and Lithuanians were aware of their peripheral status, and were highly motivated to unravel it as they claimed a heritage that was as old and illustrious as that of other Europeans. Defining themselves as both inside Europe and on its margins, the Commonwealth's elites embraced a kind of alterity that could never be complete. This was a self-image that remained rooted in European collective imaginaries, though one projected against a mottled background of ambivalence.

In opposition to 'Christendom', the idea of 'Europe' was a form of cultural identification that foregrounded variety over homogeneity. Swapping an older self-representation that was based mostly on creed for a new one that arose from classical philology and the new developments in the cartographical representation of land, triggered a process of expansion of conceptual space that was now openly called 'Europe'. Both Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire were European states from a strictly geographical point of view, and this alone affected the larger

[215] See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 37.

stakes of what it meant to be an early modern European. For, this meant sharing the continent with Muslims and the Eastern Orthodox among many other different peoples. Perceptions of Polishness as a form of cultural liminality played a role in the conceptualisation of this shared space, defining Europe as a spectrum rather than a set identity. As Polish, Lithuanian, Prussian and Ruthenian nobilities were Christian and firmly European according to their purported classical heritage, at the same time they took after many Ottoman fashions. In their cultural heterodoxy, the inhabitants of the Commonwealth thus typified the malleability of Europe as a form of representation. Perceptions of places like Poland-Lithuania prevented Europeans from assuming that there was a tangible boundary between Europe and its neighbours. Continually pushing the notion of Europe backwards and forwards by changing Europeans' understandings of their continent's limits, the depictions of Polishness contributed to developing a transnational European self-identification that until today appears in a never-ending process of flux.

Chapter 2

Periphery as Performance: Entries of Polish-Lithuanian Ambassadors to Rome and Paris

> The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents … the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious.
>
> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.[216]

In late autumn of 1633, the Roman populace was given the opportunity to witness an unusual spectacle of opulence and grandeur. The show's ultimate producer and actor was Jerzy Ossoliński, Grand-Treasurer of the Crown and envoy extraordinary of the recently elected Polish-Lithuanian monarch Ladislaus IV Vasa (r. 1632–1648) who, bound by the rules of convention, needed to despatch a mission of obedience to the Papal capital.[217] Adequate to the gravity of this appointment, Ossoliński made every effort to flaunt Poland-Lithuania's idiosyncratic customs and self-asserted military strength, effectively turning the ceremonial

[216] Ibid., 36.

[217] The previous Polish-Lithuanian embassy of obedience, led by Paweł Wołucki, Bishop of Płock, made a formal entry into Rome on 28 January 1613 to pledge obedience to Paul V on behalf of Sigismund III. Although the new Pope was elected on 16 May 1605, Sigismund was at the time engaged in conflict with Sweden, and a civil war at home. Subsequently, the war with Muscovy and the empty treasure prevented the king from sending an envoy to Rome. See Hanna Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości w barokowym Rzymie, 1587-1696* (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2012), 72–77.

pomp of ambassadorial entry to Rome into one of the most memorable public pageants of Urban VIII's pontificate (1623–1644).[218]

By all means, the spectacle that Ossoliński created was a *tour de force* of ostentatious pomp and calculated plaudits. Celebrating the event's effect on beholders, a number of pamphlets and images soon began to circulate across Rome and Europe. One particularly demonstrative proof of the curiosity that Ossoliński's entry aroused is an oil painting by an anonymous artist, today on display at Kórnik Castle in western Poland (Fig. 2.1).[219] Colourful and busy in detail, the painting depicts the whole arsenal of outlandish props, luxurious fabrics and extravagant customs deployed on the occasion. The exotic cortège is seen as it passes through the Piazza del Popolo, where local bystanders observe the event. Polish-Lithuanian visitors wear lavish *żupans* (tunics) and *delias* (cloaks), garments of Ottoman provenance, complete with *kalpak* hats liberally adorned with exuberant feathers. The procession is led by mounted trumpeters who also wear tunics, cloaks and luxuriant plumes; they are followed by a cavalier on white horse, sumptuously clad in a golden tunic and fantastical helmet adorned with white feathers. The bellicose man carries a long spear in a gesture of panache. Large wings attached to his horse's back render the rider even more curious to the eye. The message conveyed by the Kórnik painting is that of strangeness and excess.

The rider is followed by a large number of fellow Poles, all equally flamboyant, many on horseback. The horses are tacked up in Ottoman-style saddle-cloths, their heads decorated with feathers. Five horse in the middle of the cortège are led by grooms clad in outlandish apparel and

[218] Tomasz Makowski, *Poselstwo Jerzego Ossolińskiego do Rzymu w roku 1633* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1996), 36.

[219] Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości w barokowym Rzymie*, 92–93.

turbans. As the turban was unmistakably a symbol of Islam in early modernity,[220] the image of Polishness in the Kórnik painting is confounded with the world of alterity. Further adding to this unsettling sense of ambiguity, the artist depicted camels covered in opulent red fabric at the head of the cavalcade. The shaven heads and luxurious moustaches of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility supply an additional set of semiotic peculiarities that situate the otherwise Christian Poland-Lithuania close to the realm of Ottoman difference. This sense of strangeness and extravagance is topped off by the war hammers carried by several noblemen in the cortège, another practice associated with the Ottoman Empire. Closing the striking procession is Polish-Lithuanian ambassador Ossoliński, the main protagonist of the event, who also appears to indulge in overabundance. Wearing a magnificent red *żupan*, a golden cape and a plumed hat, with a moustache and confident pose to match, Ossoliński rides a lavishly bedecked white stallion. Although he represents the Roman Catholic monarch of Poland-Lithuania, the ambassador appears as outlandish as the turbaned men in the cortège.

This chapter asks what happens when a self-professed cultural centre like Rome experiences an influx of people from the perceived margins. As the Kórnik painting makes evident, Ossoliński's illustrious spectacle in the papal capital triggered awareness of the visible differences between Poles and early modern Romans. Yet, as will be argued here, looking at Poles also re-affirmed the idea that Rome was the centre of a wider Christian world, which included even such outliers as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The notion of Roman centrality depended on the margin's potential to define the centre's scope of influence. The further away the margin was from its centre, the larger the ambit that the centre could claim.

[220] Charlotte Colding Smith, *Images of Islam, 1453-1600: Turks in Germany and Central Europe* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 126.

Rome, of course, was not the only major European city that experienced the passage of a Polish-Lithuanian ambassadorial delegation through its streets. To provide another example, this chapter will also discuss the 1645 entry of Krzysztof Opaliński to Paris, a European capital that like Rome laid claim—one that never fully materialised—to hegemony over the continent. Ossoliński's and Opaliński's entries are not chosen at random, but because they generated a profusion of textual and visual representations that circulated across Europe. The status of both Rome and Paris as centres of European printing and information exchange was precisely why Polish-Lithuanian envoys did not spare any expense to present their country in what in their view was the most flattering angle: they knew that this image would be carried by pamphlets, engravings and drawings to readers and viewers in all corners of Europe. This was an occasion to send a positive message to these audiences about Poland-Lithuania's status as a frontier between the world of western Christianity and the Ottoman Empire. Poland-Lithuania was in this message the 'bulwark of Christendom'.[221]

But as Polish-Lithuanian ambassadors in Rome and Paris were performing the spectacle of their country's military strength, governments in the papal and French capitals were ensuring that the pamphlets and engravings which commemorated these events foregrounded above all the centrality of Rome and Paris. European readers and viewers were to see the Commonwealth as the border of a wider political, cultural and confessional domain of which stewardship Rome and Paris both claimed.[222] Thus, alongside the performance of peripherality, we simultaneously see a performance of centrality: the centre needs to discursively construct its peripheries in order to be

[221] Paul Srodecki, *Antemurale Christianitatis: Zur Genese der Bollwerksrhetorik im östlichen Mitteleuropa an der Schwelle vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit* (Husum: Matthiesen Verlag, 2015), 305–38.

[222] For the claims to centrality of Rome and Paris, see P. J. A. N. Rietbergen, *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome: Barberini Cultural Policies* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 64; Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 11–33.

self-perceived as a centre. The task of this chapter is, then, to demonstrate that the preoccupation with Poland-Lithuania's location on Christendom's eastern periphery was in fact driven by the search for self-definitions, both in Poland-Lithuania and in Europe's major centres. As writers and artists in Rome and Paris located the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the threshold between the familiar and the exotic, they were in fact reiterating the centrality of the location from which they spoke.

At the Threshold of the Familiar World

Of Polish-Lithuanian appearances in Europe's key cities, Ossoliński's 1633 entry to Rome was one of the most remarkable. Providing an occasion to marvel at what was both foreign and enticing, the event received wide coverage as pamphlets, prints and paintings of Ossoliński's procession spread across Europe.[223] While Romans likely used these media to revisit their own memories of the ambassador's flamboyant cortège, other Europeans treated them as a source of information about the distinctive features of Polish-Lithuanian dress and custom, likely in concordance with costume books and travel narratives that had preceded the entry. All these forms of representation profiled Poland-Lithuania as a milieu associated with grandiose displays of cultural liminality, a place at the crossroads between east and west.[224]

[223] Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości w barokowym Rzymie*, 77–100; Makowski, *Poselstwo Jerzego Ossolińskiego do Rzymu w roku 1633*, 8–9.

[224] For the discussion on identification, its philosophical background and relation to the discourse on identity, see Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 6–10.

Pamphlets in Polish and in Italian that reported on Ossoliński's mission in Rome highlighted the scale of the event.[225] From these documents, we know that Ossoliński reached Rome on Sunday, 20 November. This was, however, an unofficial appearance in the city. Despite the informal character of Ossoliński's arrival, he was greeted outside the city gates by over seventy high-born onlookers, all eager to meet with the ambassador. They were led by Cosimo de Torres, Cardinal Protector of Poland-Lithuania.[226] Among this crowd were other cardinals, foreign ambassadors and local nobility.[227] Having stopped by at his official Roman residence at the Palazzo Gabrielli in Piazza della Trinità dei Monti, Ossoliński then headed *incognito* to a papal audience at the Quirinal Palace where he also met with the nepots. The ambassador subsequently left Rome to retire out of town in the papal vineyard at Villa Giulia.

Only a week later, on Sunday, 27 November, Ossoliński made his solemn entry into the papal capital. The route led through the Porta del Popolo into the ambassador's lodgings in Piazza della Trinità dei Monti.[228] It was indeed on this occasion that Ossoliński made the most lasting impression on the city's populace, the Roman nobility, and foreign visitors by orchestrating a sumptuous parade full of lavish costumes and curious customs. The textual

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[225] *Sławny wiazd do Rzymv [...] Ie[g]o M.P. Ierzego Ossolinskiego wielkiego posla polskiego, z włoskiego na polskie przetlumaczony, de data 3. Decemb. 1633.* (S.l.: s.n., 1633). There is also a manuscript in the National Library in Warsaw dated 2 December 1633, BN BOZ, 855, pp. 261r–262r, *Opis Wjazdu Je[go] M[oś]ci Pana Ossolińskiego Posła Polskiego do Rzymu de data 2 Decembris 1633*. Virginio Parisi, *Relatione della solenne entrata dell'Illustriss. ... Sig. G. Ossolinschi ... Primo Gentilhuomo Di Camera Del Sereniss. ... Uladislas Re Di Polonia, E Suetia ... E Suo Ambasciadore Straordtnario [Sic] ... Alla Santita di Nostro Signore Urbano VIII., etc.* (Apresso Francesco Cavalli: In Roma, 1633); Virginio Parisi, *Vera relatione della solenne entrata dell'illustriss. & eccellentiss. sig. Giorgio Ossolinschi: Sire d ; Ossolin, conte de Thencin ... promo gentilhuomo di camera del Sereniss. e potentiss. Vladislao IV ... e suo ambasciadore straordinario d'ubedienza alla Stantità di Nostro Signor PP. Urbano VIII, et insieme ambasciadore straordinario alla Sereniss. Republica di Venetia* (In Roma: Appresso Francesco Cavalli, 1634); Anon., *Solennità Dell'entrata in Roma E Cavalcate Dell'eccellentissimo Signor Giorgio Ossolinsghi Conte Di Thenezun ...* (In Roma: Apresso Paolo Masotti, 1633).

[226] *Relatione della Solenne Entrata* […], In Roma, Apresso Francesco Cavalli, 1633, p. A3.

[227] *Gazette de France* (1633), no. 116, 'De Rome, le 28. Novembre 1633', 505; Parisi, *Relatione della solenne entrata*, 11.

[228] *Gazette de France* (1633), no. 119, De Rome, le 29 Novembre 1633, 513.

descriptions of the event create an image of excess similar to that we have seen in the Kórnik painting. The procession is said to have been led by two couriers dressed in red satin and black velvet kaftans. Behind them were twenty-two carts with the ambassadors' luggage pulled by mules decorated in colourful fabrics. Next trod ten camels in silver harnesses and halters, with pads made of red velvet. These exotic animals were attended by turbaned Tatars and Armenians in silk cloaks begirded with golden chains. These men were followed by four trumpeters wearing dress of orange satin and green velvet and *kalpak* hats.[229] Next in row were thirty mounted Cossacks armoured in hand bombards, bows and quivers, dressed in red silk cloaks. Reportedly, one of the most curious figures of the spectacle was Ossoliński's senior valet, Mr Kociszewski, dressed in a jewel-studded cloak made of white brocade patterned with golden flowers. Mounted on a dyed horse, Kociszewski sat on a horse-tack adorned with turquoises, with his feet rested on golden stirrups. He wore a feathered helmet and a shield, and carried a mace made, as the pamphlets proclaim, 'according to the Persian custom'. In addition, a pole of crane feathers was mounted to his saddle, giving the rider a bellicose look.

Descriptions of profusion and lavishness continue. Kociszewski was followed by twenty servants of the ambassador, all wearing turquois-coloured cloaks with orange-coloured underlining, carrying bows and quivers. Following suit, Tatars and Armenians pulled five dyed Turkish horses whose saddles were encrusted with precious jewels. These horses were fitted with golden horseshoes. To the joy of the Roman crowd, two of these horseshoes were reportedly lost during the parade, adding to the sumptuousness of the affair.[230] The procession was followed by many Polish-Lithuanian noblemen dressed and armoured 'alla polacca'. Next in line were

[229] Sławny wjazd, 1-2; Solennità dell'entrata, 4r; Relatione della solenne entrata, 3v; Vera relatione, 3v-4r.

[230] Makowski, *Poselstwo Jerzego Ossolińskiego do Rzymu w roku 1633*, 35. Sławny wjazd, 2-3; Solennità dell'entrata, 4r; Relatione della solenne entrata, 3v; Vera relatione, 4v-r.

Roman aristocracy and foreign dignitaries paving the way for the main protagonist, the ambassador himself. Ossoliński, mounted on a dyed horse tacked with rubies and other precious gems, wore a white brocaded dolman covered in diamonds and a fur-fitted cloak. Donning a fur *kalpak* hat embellished with a large ruby, the ambassador carried a golden sabre also covered in rubies. This ceremonial weapon was estimated to cost a staggering five thousand scudi. The cortège was closed by the ambassador's carriage pulled by six horses.[231]

An altogether different event was staged for Tuesday, 6 December, the day of Ossoliński's public audience with Pope Urban VIII. Nearly 700 horses were paraded from Porta Flaminia to Castel Sant'Angelo, and the ambassador swore obedience to the Pope on behalf of King Ladislaus, followed by political negotiations as per the royal letter of instruction. Yet again, Ossoliński had organised a colourful procession. Poles paraded in opulent costumes 'alla polacca'. Ossoliński, mounted on a lavishly decorated stallion, was himself 'dressed in the costume of his country' ('more patrio indutus') that included an orange-coloured fur-fitted velvet cloak with golden buttons covered in diamonds and other jewels. The horse's saddle was once more adorned with gems, the horse-tack was covered in gold, and the horse's head was decorated with a large diamond and a feather.[232] Pamphleteer Virginio Parisi deemed this procession even more magnificent that the official entry to Rome on 27 November, 'più bellissime e forsi di maggior pompa della prima'.[233]

Comments on the lavishness, excess and exoticism of Polish-Lithuanian costume and custom reverberate through all the pamphlets that describe Ossoliński's mission to Rome. Readers learn that Poles were a valiant society located at the threshold between 'Christendom',

[231] Sławny wjazd, 5; Solennità dell'entrata, 5r; Relatione della solenne entrata, 5r; Vera relatione, 5r-4v.

[232] Solennità dell'entrata, 5r-v; Relatione della solenne entrata, 6r.

[233] Solennità dell'entrata, 5v; Relatione della solenne entrata, 6r; Vera Relatione, 6r-v.

as if it were a coherent category, and the Ottoman Empire. The exotic dress of the cortège makes the liminal character of Polish-Lithuanian society visible and tangible. In spite of this somewhat estranging effect, the pamphlets were simultaneously—as we will see—bridging the gap between two societies, Rome and Poland-Lithuania, by pointing to what they had in common as well as their differences.

These pamphlets were most likely commissioned by Ossoliński himself,[234] implying that specific instructions were given to the Italians who wrote these detailed accounts. The conflation between Polishness and exoticism was thus apparently intentional, probably stressed as a means to impress the Romans. The accolades of the Polish-language pamphlet *Sławny wjazd do Rzymu* [*The Famous Entry to Rome*], which is thought to have been Ossoliński's commission, asserts that the cortège had gained the universal sympathy of the entire city of Rome, and 'there [was] no memory that could surpass such pomp'.[235] Yet as much as Ossoliński was communicating Poland-Lithuania's uniqueness to the eternal city, he also had to answer to the Polish-Lithuanian parliament (*sejm*). The Commonwealth's nobility, who took pride in the idiosyncrasy of their costume and customs, expected the ambassador to flaunt Poland-Lithuania's uniqueness. While Ossoliński performed before spectators in Rome, he was also putting on a show for his compatriots at home.[236] The pamphlets were thus a commentary on the Commonwealth's location at the threshold of the familiar world—a commentary that was addressed simultaneously to Romans and Polish-Lithuanian nobility.

[234] Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości w barokowym Rzymie*, 80.

[235] "pamiętnika nie masz, by widział taka pompę" ibid. *Sławny wjazd do Rzymu*, 1633, p. A2v.

[236] The event was widely commented by the Polish-Lithuanian writers of the day. See, for example, Samuel Twardowski, *Władysław IV, król polski i szwedzki*, ed. Roman Krzywy (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2012), 225–34.

To prove that he met the expectations placed on him, Ossoliński reported at the *sejm* in 1635, asserting that he had performed all his ambassadorial duties in Polish-Lithuanian costume. In a speech delivered to his fellow citizens, he declaims: 'I did not wish to forgo the national dress of my country', by which he means an Ottomanesque costume, which by then had been indigenised as 'native' in the Commonwealth.[237] He also reported that all the streets of Rome had filled up with people who were curious to see his entry, making the fame of the 'Polish nation' unrivalled in all Christendom.[238] Ossoliński probably believed in this lofty statement to be true. In fact, many years later he deemed the French-style dress that was fashionable among the upper classes across Europe to have been unsuitable for Polish-Lithuanian nobility. Responding to the military defeat with the Cossacks at the Battle of Pyliavtsi (Piławce) in September 1648, Ossoliński scribbled into his diary that the reason for the decisive Cossack victory was 'a long peace during which we learnt to run our estates like Germans, build our fountains like Italians, and perfume our clothes like the French'.[239] For Ossoliński, such dilution of Polish-Lithuanian costume and customs weakened the nation.

The aim of Ossoliński's procession accordingly was to display the idiosyncracies of Polish-Lithuanian costume in order to dazzle and impress the Romans by invoking the military power of his country. It certainly succeeded if the pamphlets and speeches are to be believed.[240] However, while recognizing the Commonwealth as an important military ally, the various

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[237] "[…] nie chciałem ojczystego odmieniać stroju." Relacja […] legata, qt in Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 1924, 482.

[238] *[seym] Relacya poselstwa rzymskiego którą odprawował [...] Jerzy z Osolina Ossoliński*, 1634, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 4228/II.

[239] Żukowski, "W kapeluszu i w delii", p. 25. "[…] pokój długi, w którym nauczyliśmy się po niemiecku gospodarować, po włosku fontanować, po francusku stroje perfumować."

[240] Descriptions of Ossoliński's appearances in Rome in the *Gazette de France*, which were certainly not redacted by the ambassador, maintain the laudatory tone of the pamphlets. *Gazette de France* 1633, no. 119, p. 513 (the 'second entry'). Plus No. 116, p. 505 for correspondence from Rome 28 Nov (the 'first entry'). Also; Year 1634, no. 4 (for the entry on 6 Dec.), p. 13.

accounts of Ossoliński's mission in Rome also emphatically situated this country between the east and west. Whereas for Poles living at the threshold provided opportunities to self-fashion themselves as the 'defenders of Christendom', for Romans the notion of Poland-Lithuania as a frontier implied the country's openness to Ottoman culture, as the images and pamphlets suggest. As will be explored below, the inconsistencies of these two visions of the Commonwealth's status in Europe are particularly evident in depictions of the entry that were not commissioned by the ambassador.

Simultaneous Inclusion and Exclusion

Soon after Ossoliński's embassy had left Rome, Stefano della Bella, a young Florentine artist residing in the papal capital, released a series of six etchings to commemorate the theatrical event.[241] Although the exact press run is unknown, these prints likely held much appeal, given that they are still extant in four different seventeenth-century states in many European and North American collections.[242]

The first of the etchings is the heavyweight of the series, serving as a point of entry into the compound representation (Fig. 2.2). The most immediate visual cue that captures the

[241] The etching is dedicated to della Bella's patron in Florence, Don Lorenzo de'Medici. We know this from the dedication inscribed on the pillar adorned with the arms of de'Medici family. The inscription reads: 'AL. Ser.mo Principe | D.Lorenzo de Medici | Non debbo aggra= | dir vn picciol dono | con molte parole; | percio semplicem.te | suplico V.A. ad ag= | gradire il testimo= | nio della mia obli= | gatissima diuotione | espresso in guesta po= | nera carta et humilm.ti | mele inclino | D.V.A.Ser.ma | Humiliss. et oblig.mo Ser.re | Sfefano della Bella | DD'. It is not clear, however, whether the *Entrata* was a commissioned piece, or whether it was created for an open market. Ossoliński's patronage is unlikely, given that many Polish-Lithuanian names are misspelled.

[242] The four states were published by different shops. The first lacks the address of publisher; the second contains the inscription 'Agustinus Parisinus Et Io: Bapta Negro Pontes Form: Bononie'; the third—'Giovanni Battista Negroponte'; the fourth—'Gio. Jacomo de Roßi le stampa in Roma alla Pace'. See Mieczysław Paszkiewicz, 'Tematyka polska w twórczości Stefano della Belli. Część I', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 14 (1984): 206–7; Jolanta Talbierska, *Stefano Della Bella, 1610-1664: Akwaforty ze zbiorów Gabinetu Rycin Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2001), 40–42; Juliusz A Chrościcki, *Sztuka i polityka: funkcje propagandowe sztuki w epoce Wazów, 1587-1668* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1983), 128.

beholder's attention is the title epigraph, which reads in Roman-style inscription: ENTRATA IN ROMA DELL' ECCEL^{MO} AMBASCIATORE DI POLLONIA L ANNO MDCXXXIII. Through this simple yet effective scripted signifier, viewers are instantly informed of the nature of the event they are to access through the mediation of print. The text ensures that the cavalcade of exotic bodies is read as 'Polish'. Further textual references are in place to secure identification of the figures, implying that their Polishness was not self-evident. It was the general strangeness, or perhaps even Ottomanism, of the cortège that the beholder would have detected without the clear information of the participants' ethnicity. To this end, each group of characters who take part in the procession are marked by letters of alphabet, which are linked to the elucidatory captions that are provided in the lower margin of each etching. By combining image and text, beholders could link specific individuals and groups with their respective cultural backgrounds. While graphic representation creates a picture of curious flamboyance, the textual field attempts to link it specifically to Poland-Lithuania.

Accordingly, only by reading the caption corresponding to the letter 'A' do we learn that the two minuscule figures depicted in the background near the Porta del Popolo are Polish-Lithuanian noblemen in the service of Ossoliński. The text underneath describes 'two Polish couriers wearing satin and velvet tunics'.[243] Behind these extravagantly clad men are carts pulled by 'twenty-two mules laden in different fashions' ('B').[244] This wagon train is followed by papal cavalry guardsmen ('C'),[245] and the 'mules of Lords Cardinals' ('D').[246] The image renders all these figures curious, but perhaps the most exotic element of the etching—just like in the Kórnik

[243] A. 2. Corrieri Pollacchi vestiti di raso con Giubbe di uelluto

[244] B. 22. Muli guarniti a uarie foggie

[245] C. Caualleggieri della Guardia di S. Santita

[246] D. Mule de Signori Cardinali

painting and in the textual descriptions of the entry into Rome on 27 November 1633—is the caravan of 'ten camels with the most superb saddlecloths made of red embroidered velvet, with iron headboards and silver harnesses' led—as the caption suggests—'by Persians and Armenians in diverse fashions' ('E').[247] The substitution of Tatars, who are mentioned in the pamphlets, for the Persians implies that della Bella chose to emphasise the exoticism of the event at the cost of keeping it factually correct. The spectacle of strangeness continues with the group of four mounted 'trumpeters in tunics from green velvet' ('F') who close the first sheet.[248] With fantastical plumed hats on their heads and eastern carpets used as saddle-cloths, these men fit well with the picture of exoticism exemplified by the camels. Della Bella is clearly interested in foregrounding the entry's unusual aspects.

The dome of St Peter's looming behind the outlandish animals nonetheless reminds viewers that the event depicted in the print took place in Rome, the centre (albeit contested) of western Christendom. The dome is partly occluded by the solitary figure of a Polish-Lithuanian nobleman in elaborate dress. A symbol of papal authority, St Peter's basilica signifies the purpose of Ossoliński's mission: to swear his king's obedience to the pontiff. It also marks the Commonwealth's official adherence to Roman Catholicism despite its proximity to the Ottoman Empire, and despite it being home to not only Protestant and Jewish, but also Orthodox and Muslim populations.

[247] 'E. Dieci Camelli con superbissime valdrappe di velluto rosso ricamate con ferri testiere e tortori d'Argento guidati da Persiam e Armeni con diuerse foggie.' The Persians and Armenians of della Bella's *Entrata in Roma* are identified by the *Gazette* [de France] as 'Croats'.[247] See *Gazette de France*, no. 119, De Rome, le 29 Novembre 1633, 513. The camels were probably taken back to Poland; French traveler Charles Ogier reports on seeing grazing camels in Marienburg, Royal Prussia, on 8 August 1635. See Gintel, *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce*, 1971, 1:228.

[248] F. Quattro trobetti con giubbe di velluto uerde

Polish-Lithuanian adherence to Roman Catholicism plays almost no role in Della Bella's etchings, although it was an important aspect of the various textual accounts that reported on the mission. Defence of Christendom was in fact how Ladislaus IV and Ossoliński wanted Poland-Lithuania to be imagined in Europe. Planning for the magnificent pageant in Rome, a city that was central to European information exchange,[249] both the king and the ambassador probably anticipated that representations of the entry would quickly spread across the continent. Two surviving instruction letters that Ossoliński received from the king reveal that the ambassador intended to convince Romans—and by extension other Europeans—of Poland-Lithuania's role as the bulwark of Christendom. The letter signed in June 1633 in Grodno (Hrodna) advises Ossoliński to perform the entry 'not in soft and uncustomary costume, but rather in full Sarmatian splendour that conveys military power and civil prudence'.[250] In the obedience speech Ossoliński delivered to the pope on 6 December, the Polish-Lithuanian commitment to preventing the Ottoman march on Europe was given much prominence.[251] The script makes political use of the Polish-Lithuanian victory over the Turks in Khotyn (Chocim) in 1621, implying that if it had not been for the Commonwealth's military presence on the northern Ottoman border, Italy itself would be put in peril. The oration's text goes straight to the point: 'the Italian good name and its treasures would have been destroyed had it not been for the triumph at Khotyn, which saved our most holy religion.'[252]

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[249] Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości w barokowym Rzymie*, 17–19.

[250] '… nec ornatu aliquid molle ac insolens, sed splendorem Sarmaticum et militarem praeferat, virtutis enim et civilis prudentiae …' In *Instructio Illmo Georgio comiti de Tenczyn Ossoliński … cum publica oboedientia Legato – data Grodnae die men. Juni 1633*, Lviv, Vasyl Stefanik Scientific Library of Ukraine, rkpis Ossol. Nr 225, p. 21, cited in Ludwik Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński* (Warsaw: Księgarnia Zakładu Nar. im. Ossolińskich, 1924), 472. The instruction was written into Metrica Regni Poloniae, LL 32, pp. 65–68. From there a copy in Teki Naruszewicza, Czartoryski Library m/s 210, pp. 227–238.

[251] Makowski, *Poselstwo Jerzego Ossolińskiego do Rzymu w roku 1633*, 8.

[252] '… Italico nomini cura ac invidia inustam, Chocimensi victoria detersit et sanctissimam hanc religionis arcem si non ab exitio, a periculo certe liberavit.' In *Instructio Illmo Georgio comiti de Tenczyn Ossoliński … cum publica*

More emphatically, the 1634 edition of Virginio Parisi's pamphlet *Vera Relatione della Solenne Entrata* is dedicated to Stanisław Koniecpolski, the Grand-Hetman of the Crown who gained fame fighting the Turk in the Polish-Ottoman war of 1620-21, and again in 1633-34. This rhetoric of Polish-Lithuanian strategic importance for the papacy was taken up by the secretary of the Polish-Lithuanian embassy Domenico Roncalli who on 7 December gave a passionate speech at the Accademia degli Umoristi. In this oration he praised Ossoliński's entry as evocative of the country's wealth and power.[253] Later published as a pamphlet entitled *Panegyricus in laudem Polonorium*, the speech claims that 'Rome admired the splendour and the wealth of costume, and the most solemn and truly triumphal appearance of the cortège'. It notes also that 'all those whose imagination could move above the mundane splendour of rich fabrics would have seen the spirit of a great nation, its great valour and unbeatable might'. The valiant tone of this description suggests a comparison of Ossoliński's procession with triumphal entries. Although the battle at Khotyn, which brought fame to Ladislaus across Europe,[254] had taken place over a decade prior to the oration, in 1621, Roncalli appears to laud Ossoliński's entry to Rome as a reprise of this victory. Polish-Lithuanian military power is evoked here to impress the Roman political elite. At the time that Ossoliński was visiting Rome, Poland-Lithuania was in the second year of its war with Muscovy (1632-34), as well as a military conflict with the Ottoman Empire (1633-34). The secretary of Polish-Lithuanian embassy, Auxiliary Bishop of Gniezno Andrzej Gembicki, received unspecified subsidies for this war from the Roman

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oboedientia Legato – data Grodnae die men. Juni 1633, Lviv, Vasyl Stefanik Scientific Library of Ukraine, rkpis Ossol. Nr 225, p. 21, cited in Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 472.

[253] Dominicus Roncallius, *Dominici Roncallii,... Panegyris in laudem Polonorum... habita Romae... Cui adjectae sunt aliae insignes scriptiones doctissimorum accademicorum...* (Romae: apud F. Caballum, 1633).

[254] See, for example, the Latin panegyric by the Padovan humanist Antonio Querenghi, published in 1625 in Rome. In Antonio Querenghi, 'Carmen Ad Urbem Romam in Adventu Serenissimi Vladislai Poloniae Principis', trans. Grzegorz Franczak, *Terminus* 15, no. 2 (2013): 295–305.

Curia,[255] suggesting that military affairs were a key point of discussion in the talks with papal officials.The assertion that Poland-Lithuania was the 'bulwark of Christendom' featured prominently in representations of the Commonwealth abroad. Rooted in military power, this claim addressed the threat of Turkish invasion, the fear of which—as the historian Peter Burke has noted—spread across Europe in this time period.[256]

Ossoliński received clear instructions to exploit Poland-Lithuania's position as the alleged 'bulwark of Christendom' as a bargain chip. The instruction letter, written on 15 July 1633 in Vilnius, lists the political goals of Ossoliński's mission.[257] There were several main tasks for the envoy: to forbid large monastic orders from land bequests and purchases, to support the university in Cracow in their dispute against Jesuit colleges over the right to teach in this city, to secure papal subsidies for a war with Muscovy, and to gain papal permission to found the Order of the Knights of Immaculate Conception.[258] Finally, the envoy was entrusted to obtain the pope's support for reactivating Orthodox hierarchy in Poland-Lithuania. As Ossoliński himself stated in a report to the king, this last task was 'the most important and the most difficult in negotiation [with the Holy See]'.[259] By the act of Union of Brest (Brześć) in 1595 the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was subjected to the Holy See, thus creating the

[255] Letter from Ladislaus IV to Andrzej Gembicki, Lviv, 19 October 1643. 'Wdzięczniśmy za pracę W. T., którąś czynił skutecznie w otrzymaniu subsydiow na woynę turecką.' In Ambroży Grabowski, *Władysława IV. Krola Polskiego W. Xiążęcia Lit. etc. listy i inne pisma urzędowe, które do znakomitych w kraju mężów, z kancellaryi król. wychodziły; w których tak sprawy państwa publiczne jako i prywatne królewskie, są traktowane. Materyał dziejowy* (Cracow: Stanisław Gieszkowski, 1845), 16.

[256] Burke, 'Did Europe Exist Before 1700?', 24.

[257] *Instructio ex cuius praescriptio Illustris Georgius Comes de Tęczyn Ossoliński … Datae Vilnae die XV. Julii 1633*, Metrica Regni Poloniae, LL 32, pp. 68–73. From there a copy in Teki Naruszewicza, Czartoryski Library m/s 210, pp. 227–238. Transcribed in Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 474–77.

[258] While this semi-political institution aimed at creating a powerful aristocratic coterie around the king, it ended alienating the nobility against the monarch. See Tomasz Makowski, 'Z dziejów stosunków Państwa i Kościoła: Polskie poselstwa obediencyjne W XVI i XVII wieku', *Teologia Polityczna* 1 (2004 2003): 208–10.

[259] 'Zostawał punkt najważniejszy i najtrudniejszy w konsyderacji o uspokojeniu ludzi rozróżnionych w religii greckiej'. Relacja JMP. Jerzego Ossolińskiego, Akademia Umiejętności, Cracow, rkps nr 442, transcribed in Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 485.

Greek Catholic Church. The union was strongly supported by Ladislaus's father, King Sigismund III. After initial enthusiasm, however, the support for the union waned, especially after Roman Catholic bishops did not allow their Greek Catholic counterparts to enter the ranks of senators. As tensions were growing in the later reign of Sigismund, Ladislaus attempted to ease hostilities by making Eastern Orthodoxy legal again. Ossoliński's mission was to convince the Holy See that reactivating the Orthodox institutional structures in Ruthenia was crucial for political stability in Poland-Lithuania.

The danger of this request was that it risked giving the impression that Ladislaus was in support of the schism. Ossoliński's flamboyant spectacle in Rome was staged precisely to remove any suspicions of Poland-Lithuania's diversion from Roman Catholicism. To this end, Ossoliński foregrounded victories over both the 'schismatic' Muscovy and the 'heathen' Turk. The decoration of the Palazzo Gabrielli, Ossoliński's lodgings in Rome, with representations of the recent Polish-Lithuanian triumphs responded to the potential concerns with the Commonwealth's confessional status.[260] Four inscriptions exalted Ladislaus's victories over the Lutheran Swedes, Orthodox Muscovites and Muslim Turks and Tatars. In the previously mentioned 1635 *sejm* speech, Ossoliński claimed that his solemn entry to Rome on 27 November attracted 'an incredible gathering not only of Roman people but also of those from the distant Italian lands who wanted to experience the Sarmatian pomp, all of whom were well satisfied. [The entry] convinced them of [His] Majesty's future triumphs in the East and the South'.[261] Ossoliński thus claimed before his fellow citizens that his public performance in Rome

[260] Anon., *Solennità Dell'entrata*, A3. Sławny wjazd, 4-5.

[261] '… wjazd do Rzymu … 27 *novembris* odprawił się był takim, jaki druk opisywał, porządkiem, z niewypowiedzianym zbiegowiskiem ludu nie tylko rzymskiego, ale i tych, co z odległych włoskich krajów *spectatores Sarmaticae pompae* być chcieli, za ukontentowaniem oczu i animuszów wszystkich. Tak niebo pokazało w aklamacjach Rzymu kiedyś światu panującemu nieomylną wróżbę następujących WKMci na Wschód i na Południe triumfów.' Relacja JMP. Jerzego Ossolińskiego, Cracow, Akademia Umiejętności, rkps nr 442, transcribed in Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 484.

succeeded in securing the notion of Poland-Lithuania across Europe as the bulwark of Christendom.

Regardless of Ossoliński's assurance to the *sejm*, the Commonwealth was not taken unambiguously as a constituent part of the world that Polish-Lithuanian elites claimed to defend. The country's sartorial and cultural distinctiveness in particular was a source of ambivalence, as it positioned Poland-Lithuania at the threshold rather than firmly within Europe. This attitude is clear in della Bella's etchings. While marking the Commonwealth's inhabitants as Catholics, the etchings simultaneously draw attention to the more exotic traits of the cortège.

In the second sheet (Fig. 2.3), one can see 'thirty Archers dressed in red satin with bows in hand and rifles hanging [from their back]' ('G').[262] All these cavaliers wear Polish-Lithuanian *żupan*s and plumed hats, while their horses are draped with carpets. This cavalcade is flanked by the 'Page of Arms wearing gold brocade dress in the Persian style' ('H').[263] He looks particularly colourful with a long spear, and imposing headgear decorated with feathers and wings attached to his Persianate tunic. Beholders are clearly enticed to make a connection between Polishness and exotic dress—the same association Europeans reserved for Islamic peoples.

The next two leaves maintain this focus on foreign excess by replicating the sartorial forms introduced in the first two sheets. The third leaf (Fig. 2.4) depicts 'twenty pages of the Ambassador dressed in the colour of sea water, with an orange bottom' ('I').[264] Further down the line continuing onto the subsequent leaf (Fig. 2.5), grooms lead 'Five Turkish horses adorned with the plumes of Arion and various gems, with saddles adorned with golden tinsel, the first two studded with diamonds, the third with rubies, the last two Turkish horses are loaded with bows,

[262] G. Trenta Arcieri vestiti di raso rosso Con archi in mano e carabine pendenti

[263] H. Paggio d'Arme vestito di Broccato d'oro alla Persiana

[264] I. Venti paggi di S.E. uestiti di colori d'acqua marina, e fondo ranciato

arrows, maces, scimitars, and other weapons of war, with gemmed bridles and golden horseshoes' ('K').[265] This column of grooms is succeeded by a mounted figure: 'the Ambassador's Master Equerry in beautiful costume and holding a silver mace' ('L').[266] He is accompanied by twenty other courtiers of Ossoliński described as 'the waitstaff of H[is] E[xcellence] dressed in damask in the colour of sea water' ('M').[267]

The fifth leaf (Fig. 2.6) opens in with 'various Spanish noblemen, the nobles sent by Cardinals, and other ambassadors' ('N').[268] On their heels tread mounted Polish-Lithuanian nobles 'with costume and horses of high value' in the assist of local grandees ('O').[269] The inscription at the bottom also contains the letter 'P' designating French cavaliers and papal pages.[270] They are, however, represented only on the next, final sheet (Fig. 2.7). This last leaf, which is busier than the previous ones except the first, depicts 'members of Polish-Lithuanian nobility assisted by Roman princes and other peers of the realm' ('Q').[271] Jerzy Ossoliński, referred to as 'His Excellency the Ambassador', is marked by the letter 'X'. As per the inscription, he wears 'a cloak shimmering with gold, lined with precious pelts buckled with a gem, [he also dons] a beret with a jewelled feather of exquisite beauty; he rides on a steed caparisoned in an iron bridle, and golden jeweled saddle'.[272] Like the other Polish-Lithuanian

[265] K. Cinque Caualli Turchi ornati con Pennachi d'Arione e uarie Gioie con Selle ricchissime di lama d'oro, le due prime tempestate di Diamanti la terza di Rubini le due ultime di Turchine carichi d'Archi Frezze, Mazze, Scimitarre, et altri Arnesi di guerra con Briglie gioielate e ferrature d'oro

[266] L. Mastro di stalla di S. E con bel'Abito e mazza d'Argento in mano

[267] M. Venti Camerieri di S.E. uestiti di Damasco di color d'Acqua marina

[268] N. Diuersi Signori Spagnoli e Gentilhuomini mandati da Cardinali, et altri Ambasciatori

[269] O. Molti Caualieri Pollacchi con Abiti e Caualli di gran valore armati di Mazza d Argento

[270] P. Seguiua altri Caualieri Franzesi, e Camerieri di S. Santita

[271] Q. Altri nobili Pollacchi accompagnati da Principi e Titolati Romani

[272] X. L'Eccellentiss: Ambasciatore con Abito d'oro cangiante foderato con pretiose Pelli affibbiato d'Gioielli con Berrettone con Gioiello d Pennachio d'esquisita bellezza sopra vago Corsiero con ferri briglia, e stasse d'oro gioiellate accompagnato dall Arciuescouo d'Amasia e Patriarca Gaetano et altri Prelati della Corte, seguito da

figures in della Bella's series, the ambassador projects the image of magnificence, but also of exoticism. The entire procession is closed in by Ossoliński's carriage pulled by 'Persian horses' ('Y').[273]

The recurrent associations—in both the images and pamphlets—to things Turkish and Persian highlight the liminal status of Poland-Lithuania. The sheer number of strange figures and the multiplication of unfamiliar props in the *Entrata* creates an overall impression of the collective alterity of the Polish-Lithuanian cortège. Most emphasis is placed on the exotic costumes, and the equally outlandish accessories such as plumes of feathers and fur hats, as well as the shaven heads and moustaches of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility. The lower-margin inscriptions reify the liminality of the Commonwealth's culture even further, with textual signifiers referring to 'tunics', dress 'in the Persian style', and the oversaturation of jewels. Adding to this picture are the exotic camels that locate Poland-Lithuania firmly on the eastern margins of Europe. The lavishly adorned horses, described as 'Turkish' and 'Persian,' complete the identification of the Commonwealth as liminal. Although this is the cortège of a 'Polish Ambassador', participants marked as 'Armenian' and 'Persian' take part in it as well. The overall impression conveyed by such an image of Poland-Lithuania is an effusion of flamboyance, ornamentation, and excess.

Visual representations of the event that were commissioned after della Bella's etchings reiterate this ambiguous characterization of Poland-Lithuania. One of these artworks is *The Entry of Jerzy Ossoliński into Rome* at the Royal Wawel Castle in Cracow, painted after 1643 (Fig.

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molti stassieri Pollacchi insiemé con la Guardia delli Sguizzeri di S. Santita

[273] Y. E doppo la Carozza di S. E. di velluto verde tirata da sei Caualli Persiani con altre Carozze.

2.8).[274] The rendering of many of the figures, including the ambassador himself (visible in the centre foreground), is inspired by the etching and inserted onto the panoramic vista of the pageant. In so doing, the painter maintained the exoticising character of della Bella's prints. Similarly to the *Entrata*, the oil painting also contains explanatory inscriptions provided on a stone pedestal in the bottom left corner. The interrelation between text and image thus secures the rhetoric of exoticism, with camels ('C'), 'pages in Persian costume' ('F'), 'camels of the Holy Church' ('L'), and 'Jerzy Ossoliński in an attire of golden cloth, on a horse with trappings set with gold' ('P') ensuring that the beholder picks up on Poland-Lithuania's affinity with Islamic material culture. As much as Ossoliński boasted his ability to persuade Romans of Poland-Lithuania's place within the same cultural sphere, images that were commissioned independently of Ossoliński create a more ambivalent picture.

Even the Italian pamphlets that were likely commissioned by Ossoliński, let alone the etchings and paintings, do not make much distinction between the dress and demeanour of the Poles on the one hand, and the Persians and Armenians on the other. Despite the historical affiliation of Polish-Lithuanian culture to Christian Europe, the sumptuous spectacle of Ossoliński's entry to Rome is represented in a way that brings forth strong connotations with an alleged eastern extravagance. As viewed from Rome, Polish-Lithuanian sartorial and cultural codes of self-representation displaced the otherwise Catholic Poland-Lithuania beyond the conventional limits of Christendom.

Tracing the artistic process through which della Bella created his *Entrata in Roma* offers further insight into the ambiguity of Polishness in Rome. According to the artist's biographer

[274] This dating has been inferred on account of the inscription carved out on the sarcophagus in the bottom-left corner of the picture, which identifies Ossoliński as crown chancellor, the office Ossoliński received only in 1643. *Land of the Winged Horsemen*, 152–153, no. 26.

Filippo Baldinucci, della Bella often took a sketchbook to public festivities: 'In Florence there was no public celebration or entertainment—whether a joust, a tournament, or a horse race—that he did not attend, curious to watch the event to observe every minute detail of it, then return to his workshop in order to represent it in a drawing'.[275] Art historians have long believed that della Bella's drawings and prints were faithful depictions of the festivities he witnessed.[276] Phyllis Dearborn Massar has even claimed that the artist worked 'with his sketchbook and etching needle much the way today's magazine photographer works with his camera'.[277] More recently, however, Ulrike Ilg has challenged such claims.[278] Della Bella's drawings and prints have some documentary value, with many characters of Ossoliński's entry into Rome probably sketched from life.[279] But these figures originated not only from the drawings made *in situ*, but were also copied from other artists' work.

The *Entrata* is a case in point. An album of della Bella's drawings in Florence, which for long was believed to contain drawings made from life, was recently shown by Ilg to be a more hybrid source. Although some of the sketches were indeed made from life, many were taken from a pattern book by Melchior Lorck, *Nicely Engraved and Cut Figures, in Copper and Wood*

[275] '… non si faceva in Firenze pubblica festa o trattenimento, o fosse di giostra o di tornei o di corsi de' barberi al palio, che egli prima non si portasse curioso a vederle ed osservarne ogni più minuto particolare, e poi tornatosene a bottega nol disegnasse.' In Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua,: per le quali si dimostra come, e per chi le bell' arti di pittura, scultura, e architettura lasciata la rozzezza delle maniere greca, e gottica, si siano in questi secoli ridotte all'antica loro perfezione* (Florence: Per Santi Franchi., 1681), 243. Translation after Ulrike Ilg, 'Stefano Della Bella and Melchior Lorck: The Practical Use of an Artists' Model Book', *Master Drawings* 41, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 30.

[276] See, for example, Sara Mamone, 'Le Spectacle À Florence Sous Le Regard de Stefano Della Bella', in *Stefano Della Bella, 1610-1664, Exh. Cat.*, Exh. Cat. (Caen: Musee des Beaux-Arts, 1998), 18–19.

[277] Phyllis Dearborn Massar, *Senting Stefano Della Bella: Seventeenth-Century Printmaker* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971), 7.

[278] Ilg, 'Stefano Della Bella and Melchior Lorck: The Practical Use of an Artists' Model Book'.

[279] These drawings form the collections of the Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi in Florence, the Louvre's Cabinet des Dessins in Paris, the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, the British Museum in London, the Biblioteca Reale in Turin, and the Graphische Sammlung Albertina in Vienna. See Paszkiewicz, 'Tematyka polska w twórczości Stefano della Belli. Część I', 195–98; Jolanta Talbierska, 'Twórczość Stefana della Belli (1610-1664)', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 28 (2003): 98–100.

... for Painters, Sculptors and Art Lovers ('Wolgerissene und geschnittene Figuren, in Kupfer und Holz ... für die Mahler, Bildhauer und Kunstliebenden'). The book was first published in 1619 in Hamburg, with later editions in 1626, 1641 and 1646; della Bella evidently was familiar with it.[280]

There is a close correlation between some woodcuts in Lorck's volume and della Bella's renditions of the figures in the *Entrata*. A representative example is Lorck's woodcut that depicts a Turkish rider in fantastical winged costume (Fig. 2.9). Lorck himself likely followed illustrations in costume books, such as Abraham de Bruyn's *Diversarum gentium armatura equestris* (Cologne, 1577), in which similar figures appear. Della Bella first copied the figure of the horseman in a drawing (Fig. 2.10), for it to re-appear in the second sheet of the *Entrata* as standing for Ossoliński's senior valet Kociszewski (Fig. 2.3). The similarities between these three renditions of the soldier are too striking to miss. In all three versions, a mounted man carries a lance and wears a lavish costume adorned with wings. He dons exuberant headgear and nearly disappears underneath a winged shield. Although the figures are very similar, they nonetheless were meant to stand in for different ethnicities. Lorck's version depicts a Turk, while in della Bella's *Entrata* the figure that derived from this depiction represents a Polish-Lithuanian high official. Clearly, for della Bella there was no difference between the dress of Turks and Poles. The rider is described in the etching as 'the page of arms clothed in a Persian style with golden brocade'. Polishness is here a floating signifier that can move back and forth between the imagining of both east and west.

A similar process of translation occurs between the figure of *Turkish Archer* in Lorck's woodcut (Fig. 2.11) and a near-identical turbaned man in della Bella's sketchbook (Fig. 2.12).

[280] See Erik Fischer, *Melchior Lorck: Drawings from The Evelyn Collection at Stonor Park England and from The Department of Prints and Drawings The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Copenhagen* (Copenhagen, 1962), 40–58.

The same character re-appears on the first sheet of the *Entrata*, leading the camels (Fig. 2.2). Indeed, these camels themselves are copied from Lorck's pattern book, as are some other figures. The transformation of the 'Turkish archer' into a 'Persian or Armenian camel groom' shows that for della Bella such nuances mattered very little. Neither does the artist seem to have been concerned with conflating Turkish and Polish-Lithuanian dress; both appeared equally exotic. Poland-Lithuania as a cultural border, be it in representation or historical reality, was permeable, gradatory and, above all, imaginary, for most Europeans knew it only from descriptions and images. This carefree conflation of the costume and custom of Poland-Lithuania with that of the Ottoman Empire suggests that the purpose of the *Entrata* was to display exoticism rather than to emphasize the Commonwealth's role as the alleged bulwark of Christendom. While Poles were fellow Catholics and allies, they were also suspiciously similar to the Turk. This incongruity continued to shape perceptions of Poland-Lithuania as an ambiguous border zone.

Ossoliński's entry to Rome was designed to highlight Poland-Lithuania as bulwark of Christendom, defender against the Ottoman threat, but it simultaneously created an image of the Commonwealth as a liminal place at Europe's eastern margins. The Roman imagery that represented Polish-Lithuanian idiosyncrasy in terms of the Commonwealth's curious costume and customs, revealed the furthest reach of Rome's power and simultaneously the frontier where it began to fade away. For the centre to claim its centrality, its sphere of influence needed to cover an identifiable territory, and Poland-Lithuania provided a useful outline for Rome's easternmost limit in Europe.

A threshold denotes a movement between what is inside and outside. Located at the physical and metaphorical boundary between east and west, the Commonwealth acted as a transitional zone that paradoxically both mitigated and heightened perceptions of difference

between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. While it intensified the potential appeal of Ottoman culture—as Poles appropriated some of its customs—it also expressed resistance to Ottoman invasion, as Poles depicted themselves as Christendom's saviours. Oscillating between the Christian west and the Islamic east, the various representations of Ossoliński's procession foreground the cultural ambiguity of the border zone. Yet the hybridity of a threshold was precisely what helped to define the supposed centre of Europe. The perceptions of Polishness conveyed by such imagery aptly reveal the subversive potential of liminality, which in the words of ethnographer Arnold van Gennep describes the state of 'waver[ing] between two worlds'.[281]

Mocking the Periphery

Twelve years after the printing of the *Entrata in Roma*, della Bella had the opportunity to depict another Polish-Lithuanian civic entry, this time into Paris. The occasion was a solemn entry into the French metropolis made by the Polish-Lithuanian ambassadors Krzysztof Opaliński, Palatine of Poznań, and Wacław Leszczyński, Prince-Bishop of Ermland, on 29 October 1645.[282] This time, della Bella did not venture to make a series of prints for the open market, but was likely hired by a prominent member of the Polish-Lithuanian legacy to prepare sketches for their eventual reproduction in print. The commission was possibly influenced by the patron's familiarity with the artist's previous oeuvre. Altogether, della Bella's Parisian drawings depict

[281] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 18.

[282] This was preceded by the royal envoy, Pomeranian palatine Gerard Denhoff who arrived in Paris in August 1645 to sign the nuptial agreement between the king and the princess. As per the convention, Denhoff made an official entry into town. Chrościcki, *Sztuka i polityka*, 131; Kazimierz Waliszewski, *Polsko-francuzkie stosunki w XVII wieku 1644-1667: Opowiadania i źródła historyczne ze zbiorów archiwalnych francuzkich publicznych i prywatnych...* (Cracow: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1889), 203; Karolina Targosz, *Uczony dwór Ludwiki Marii Gonzagi, 1646-1667: Z dziejów polsko-francuskich stosunków naukowych* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1975). For the transcript of marriage contract, see 'Le contract de Marriage du Roy et la Reine de Pologne', in *Gazette de France*, no. 145 (1645): 1041–48.

230 human figures, out of which sixty-one are individualised portraits with participants' names indicated by notes. This attention to detail, including the correct spelling of Polish names, suggests that the drawings were vetted by a member of the Polish-Lithuanian legacy. The commission never came to fruition, however. It is uncertain why the project never materialised, although Polish art historian Juliusz Chrościcki speculates that it could be due to financial problems.[283] Nonetheless, fourteen sketches in pencil and pen have survived in the British Museum, with further drawings kept at the Louvre.[284]

The characters represented in della Bella's drawings are similar in style to his other depictions of Poles, many of whom wear exotic costume. One of the sheets (Fig. 2.14) represents a group of riders: Opaliński himself, depicted together with Leszczyński in the assist of French aristocracy at the left, wears a Polish-Lithuanian *żupan*, a fur-fitted cloak and a kalpak hat with a plume. Many other members of the train also appear in Polish-Lithuanian dress. The idiosyncratic dress of Poles contrasts with the dress of local French dignitaries—a juxtaposition that enhances the image of Poles' sartorial exoticism.

The procession made for a spectacular view, and was widely commented upon. The *Gazette de France* described it in great detail.[285] Its anonymous reporter paid much attention to the eastern-inspired costumes:

> Everything we say of the ancient splendour of the Romans, and of that of today's Persians and other Oriental peoples, appeared on a smaller scale in the superb entry of the Ambassadors extraordinary of Poland, who came to take marriage vows of their King with Princess Marie-

[283] Chrościcki, *Sztuka i polityka*, 130.

[284] De Vesme, *Le Peintre-Graveur Italien*, Milan 1906. No. 158, 274, 276, and more. Sketches in pencil and pen of a few figures, are kept at the Louvre: Viatte, *Dessins de Stefano della Bella 1610-1664. Inventaire Général des Dessins Italiens II*. Musée du Louvre Cabinet des Dessins, Paris 1974, no. cat. 198-203.

[285] *Gazette de France*, 1645, no. 141, pp. 1001–1016.

> Louise de Gonzague: it must be confessed that either in wealth, or in the naiveté of colours, or in the benefit derived from the shape of their costume that compares with that of other long-robed nations, this century has seen nothing more worthy of admiration and applause that this great and populous city has now seen.[286]

The author emphasises the great splendour of the procession, but it is a splendour that is suspended half-way between respectable magnificence and the obscenity of excess. Poles are at once compared with the ancient Romans and the 'Oriental peoples' of the day. Emerging from this description is a rhetoric of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion where Poles are deemed both comparable to the French and distinctively different.

As was the case for Ossoliński twelve years earlier, the ambassadors to Paris were liable before the Polish-Lithuanian *sejm*, and therefore the spectacle of the entry was addressed as much to the Polish-Lithuanian nobility as it was to the Parisians, and by extension the whole of Europe. Thus the procession was again orchestrated to suggest the military strength of a country located on western Christendom's eastern border. From the perspective of Polish-Lithuanian court, this message was desirable, since on the domestic front the king could claim his respect for Polish-Lithuanian costume. Despite the dominance of Italian and French fashions among the courtly elites in Warsaw, the ambassador performed his procession in Polish-Lithuanian garb. Moreover, the marriage between Princess Marie-Louise Gonzague de Nevers and King Ladislaus was arranged to forge a new alliance with France, in an effort to break from the Vasas'

[286] 'Tout ce quel'on raconte de l'ancienne splendeur des Romains, & de celle d'aujourh'huy des Perses & des autres peuples Orientaux, a paru en abregé dans sa superbe entrée des Ambassadeurs extrairdinaires de Pologne, venus pour faire les cérémonies du marriage de leur Roy avec la Princesse Louïse Marie de Gonzague: qui nous ont fait confesser, que soit en la richesse, soit en la naifveté des couleurs, soit en l'avantage que tirent de la forme de leurs habits les nations long-vestues; ce siecle n'a rien veu plus digne d'admiration & de l'applaudissement que leur a donné cette grande & populeuse Ville.' Ibid., 1001-1002.

traditional reliance on the Habsburgs.[287] This initially was a welcome news in the Commonwealth, as the gentry despised the Habsburgs for their absolutist tendencies, and feared the Vasas might follow suit if let loose. Thus, a procession in a foreign country could be used to build political capital at home.

From the Bourbon point of view, an entry of Poles into Paris provided an occasion for comparison between Frenchmen and Poles. Apart from the predominance of Ottomanesque dress in the cortège, the *Gazette*—aware of its mission as a tool of French self-aggrandisement—found a reason to show France's cultural impact on the Commonwealth. A number of Poles who were residents in Paris allegedly wore French dress during the procession, an occurrence that the *Gazette* duly reported.[288] The message is here that even the Poles, who lived on Europe's margins, appreciated French fashions. This self-assigned attractiveness of local sartorial codes strengthens the cosmopolitan appeal of French costume, moving its reach to the very limits of Christendom. So vast apparently was the spread of French culture that it extended even onto those far-away cultural outliers.

A number of images that were commissioned to commemorate the Polish-Lithuanian embassy to Paris emphasised a sense of alterity that characterised the envoys and their entourage.[289] One of these representations is a print etched by François Campion (Fig. 2.15). The work is divided into two registers, with the upper section depicting the wedding fête, and the lower the cortège of Polish-Lithuanian ambassadors. The procession at the bottom renders

[287] Stefania Ochmann-Staniszewska, *Dynastia Wazów w Polsce* (Warsaw: PWN, 2006), 191.

[288] 'Plusieurs Gentils-hommes Polonois demeurans en cette ville, & vestus à la françoise, venoyent en suite au meilleur ordre qu'il leur fut possible, pour rendre hõneur à cette ambassade.' *Gazette de France*, 1645, no. 141, p. 1008

[289] The nonextant Ambassadors Stairs in the Versailles had a fresco decoration made to the design by Charles Le Brun, in commemoration of the Polish-Lithuanian visit. Chalcographie du Musée du Louvre 1977, no. cat. 28. Moreover, Jean Boisseau was commissioned to publish an etching depicting a snake-like train of Poles making a ceremonial entry into Paris.

Polish-Lithuanian nobility and their servants flanked by the Polish-Lithuanian dignitaries assisted by French aristocracy. This pairing up brings in a contrast that defines French costume as much as it conveys Polish-Lithuanian difference. While the French wear jackets, trousers and brimmed hats, Poles don *ferezja* overcoats, long capes, and fur-fitted *kuczma* hats.

The inclusion of two men described as 'les deux Turc' amidst this group of Polish-Lithuanian nobility in particular serves to emphasize similarities between Poles and Turks. These two soldiers wear hats decorated with Islamic crescents and carry scimitar-like scythes and quivers full of arrows. It is only owing to these details and the textual reference that the beholder does not confuse them for Poles, as these two ethnicities do not vary much in costume from each other in the etching. 'Sir Bilinski, grand equerry' who rides a horse before the 'two Turks' wears the same type of long robe, long boots and a fantastical hat. Similarly, the infantrymen before the equerry wear the same kind of exotic dress. So do the nobility on horseback behind the Turks. At the right, the mounted ambassadors at the foot of the cortège are accompanied by French nobility. While Leszczyński wears the robes of a bishop that were pan-European in style, Opaliński dons the opulent dress of a Polish-Lithuanian magnate, which is clearly influenced by Ottoman convention. Positioned against the latest aristocratic fashions of France, Opaliński appears as exotic as the other members of his retinue.

This juxtaposition is even more evident in the upper register of the print, which depicts the nuptial festivities that took place in the royal palace. The *Gazette* helps to identify the figures at the table (from left to tight) as Gaston, Duke of Anjou, brother of the late Louis XIII, Philippe; Duke of Orléans younger brother of the minor king; the young Louis XIV himself; Marie-Louise and Anne of Austria, the Queen Mother. Next to the royal family sit ambassadors Opaliński and

Leszczyński.[290] The scene is enlivened by the inclusion of eight members of Polish-Lithuanian nobility who not only wear exotic costume, but also carry sinister-looking war hammers. The Pole in the foreground holds a quiver of arrows, making him practically undistinguishable from the two Turks in the lower register. Adding to this cultural ambiguity, the Polish-Lithuanian nobility in the print have their heads shaven, with only a tuft of hair left atop. This makes them appear closer to Tartars—to whom Poles were often compared in the travel literature of the day—than to the fashionably clad French nobility at the left.

A similar contrast is presented in a print published by Jean Ganière, which depicts the *per procura* wedding between Marie-Louise and Ladislaus (Fig. 2.16). The sacrament is ministered by Leszczyński, while Opaliński accepts the marriage vow from the French princess on behalf of his king. The handsome and bearded Opaliński and the stately Leszczyński who wears the robes of a Roman Catholic bishop still fit into the genteel environment of the French royal court. The two Polish-Lithuanian noblemen at the left, however, belong in a different world. With their shaven heads, prominent moustaches, axes and feathered hats, all evocative of Islamic culture, they seem out of place. Their vacant visages only exacerbate this impression.

Writing about the Polish-Lithuanian embassy, the lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria and memoir writer Françoise Bertaut de Motteville (c. 1621–1689) made explicit the disparaging view that Poland-Lithuania's difference was of eastern origin:

> This Winter there was a second Embassy of the Poles which was fine and worthy our Curiosity; for it represented to us that ancient Magnificence which passed from the Medes to the Persians, whose Luxury is so finely painted to us by the antient Authors. Tho' the Scythians were never

[290] The *Gazette de France* also lists the marriage contract. *Gazette de France*, 1645, no. 145, pp. 1041–1048. It also and describes the marriage ceremony that took place on 5 November in the Louvre's royal chapel. *Gazette de France*, 1645, no. 146, pp. 1049–1060.

> reckoned Men of Pleasure, yet their Descendants who are now the Neighbours of the Turks, seem inclinable in some Measure to ape the Grandeur and Majesty of the Seraglio. There still appeared in them some Faces of their old Barbarity; and yet our French People instead of laughing at them, as they had intended, were forced to commend them, and to own freely to the Advantage of that Nation, that their Entry was very well worth our Regard.[291]

Motteville writes that in this encounter with Poles, the pleasantries of diplomacy masked ambivalent sentiment under the guise of politeness. The French apparently overcame their aversion to the Poles in order to perform the game of courting that helped them to attain larger diplomatic goals. Among these goals was the extension of French influence to Europe's eastern corners.

Poles themselves did not always seem aware of (or choose to publicise) the ambiguous attitudes of the French courtiers towards them. The numerous accounts of Opaliński's entry into Paris that circulated in Poland-Lithuania were indiscriminately positive about the event, describing it only in superlatives.[292] Opaliński himself bragged to his brother Łukasz in a private

[291] Françoise Motteville, *Memoirs for the History of Anne of Austria, Wife to Lewis XIII. of France;: And Regent of That Kingdom from His Death to the Accession of Her Son Lewis XIV. ... Tr. from the Original French of Madame de Motteville, Who Was the Queen Regent's Chief Companion and Confident, and Who Has Likewise Added an Account of the Troubles of King Charles I. Not to Be Met with in Clarendon Or Any Other English Writer, Being the Substance of Several Conversations Betwixt His Queen, Then in Exile at the French Court, and the Author of the Memoirs ...*, vol. 1 (London: J. Darby, 1726), 260–61. Françoise de Motteville's memoirs were first published in French as *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Anne d'Autriche* in 1722. The original passage in French in Motteville, *Mémoires*, 1886, vol. 1, p. 248.

[292] Polish adaptations of this description appeared in Warsaw in 1645, published by Piotr Elert as: *Wjazd wspaniały posłów polskich do Paryża. Poza tym opisanie pierwszej audiencji, którą mieli u króla francuskiego i królowej jejmości, tudzież i księżnej jejmości Ludoviki Mariej mianowanej królowej polskiej*; another translation was published in Cracow by Walerian Piątkowski. Published in Polish: *Wjazd spaniały* [Warsaw], see Zawadzki 1977, no. 468; Published in Polish: *Wjazd spaniały* [Cracow], see Zawadzki 1977, no. 469; Another one published in Polish but without the place of printing: See see Zawadzki 1977, no. 470; Published in Latin: *Kanon expeditio* 1646, k.c. 12. Published in Polish: *Wjazd spaniały* [Warsaw], see Zawadzki 1977, no. 468; Published in Polish: *Wjazd spaniały* [Cracow], see Zawadzki 1977, no. 469; Another one published in Polish but without the place of printing: See see Zawadzki 1977, no. 470; Published in Latin: *Kanon expeditio* 1646, k.c. 12.

letter that 'Paris had not seen anything better than [his] splendid entry'.[293] In another letter to Łukasz, Opaliński noted that both in Germany and in Holland, Poles were deemed one of the most polite and most gentle nations.[294]

As Motteville recounted, however, Poles were not always seen as a nation that followed the rules of decorum. She continues her observations:

> 'Their Habits were very fine Vests after the Turkish Manner, over which, they wore a great Cloak with long Sleeves, which they let fall loosely by the Horses sides. Their Buttons of both their Vests and Cloaks were Rubies, Diamonds, and Pearls, and their Cloaks were lin'd with the same as their Vests. … Their Stuffs were so rich, so fine, and their colours so lively, that nothing in the World was so agreeable. Their Vests glittered too with Diamonds; yet for all this Richness, it must be confessed there is something in their Magnificence which looks very Savage. They wear no Linnen, and don't lie in Sheets like other Europeans, but wrap themselves up in Furs. Their Caps are furr'd, their heads shav'd, except a Lock upon their Crowns which hangs down behind. They are for most Part so fat and slovenly, that they are loathsome.'[295]

Motteville's characterization of Poles as 'unlike other Europeans' gives a sense of their perceived status at the Paris court. European, though exceptional, Poles dress 'after the Turkish manner', and 'wear no linen'. They are distinct, but not enough to warrant their removal from the purview of comparison that foregrounded similarity over difference. While pointing to oddities, Motteville nonetheless devotes a dozen pages to the promise of Marie-Louise becoming France's inside person in Poland-Lithuania. The memoir writer recounts an exchange Marie-Louise had with the chief minister of France before her *per procura* marriage ceremony: 'she addressed her

[293] Letter to Łukasz Opaliński, 1 November 1645, no. 88, in Krzysztof Opaliński, *Listy Krzysztofa Opalińskiego do brata Łukasza 1641-1653*, ed. R. Pollak, Wrocław 1957, p. 306.

[294] Letter from 27 October 1645, in Opaliński, 1957, p. 298.

[295] Motteville, *Memoirs*, 1:262–63.

self to Cardinal Mazarin, who had done her good Service, and told him that she was come to let him see whether the Crown that he was going to place upon her Head became her well'.[296] There is an allusion in this passage that Poland-Lithuania might fall under France's sphere of influence. In this respect, the representation of Polish-Lithuanian nobility as a 'barbarous Nation' is a useful rhetorical figure: by mocking the costume of this easternmost corner of Europe, Motteville effectively amplifies the 'Grandeur of the French'.[297] Motteville thus curates Polish-Lithuanian difference into a platform from which to assess the influence of her own nation. Representing France's new political allies, she dwells on their most unusual features in order to present Paris as a centre whose sway spreads to the limits of Europe. Although repulsed by Polish-Lithuanian manners and appearance, Motteville implicitly admits that the centrality of her own cultural and political milieu depended on outliers like Poland-Lithuania.

Other commentators also openly criticised Opaliński's entry for its Oriental barbarism, and for the coarse conduct of some participants. For example, Gédéon Tallement des Réaux (1619–1692), author of short biographies of his contemporaries, described the Poles at the wedding as having 'the worst dining manners in the world' and as generally 'barbaric' in their behaviour.[298] This remark, just like Motteville's, constructs a framework in which cultural hierarchies reify interactions between societies. Drawing distinctions between their own supposed civility and Polish-Lithuanian purported exoticism, these commentators thus attempted to elevate the behaviour of the Parisian elite as an unachievable benchmark for other Europeans. This was, of course, a form of representation that was mostly aimed at the French elites; for the centre needs to create its peripheries in order to be self-recognised as a centre. In the definition of

[296] Ibid., 1:266.

[297] Ibid., 1:464.

[298] Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux, *Les Historiettes*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1862), 16–17.

Polish-Lithuanian idiosyncrasies, it was the self-perceptions of France's place in Europe and the world that was at stake.

Conclusion: Masquerade as a Rehearsal of Cultural Boundaries

Motteville understood France's centrality dialogically; only in comparison with other places could this privileged position be meaningfully claimed. Treating Poland-Lithuania as a peripheral semi-other was a means of defining the country, the city, and the self. Yet some witnesses of the Polish-Lithuanian embassy in 1645 complicated such distinctions, as they explored on their own skin the threshold between the familiar and the unfamiliar by wearing Polish-Lithuanian dress. The writings of Marc-Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant (1594–1661), gentleman of Marie-Louise's chamber, give a sense of how this masquerade could function. After seeing the Polish-Lithuanian cortège, Saint-Amant confessed in a private letter to Monsieur Desnoyers, Secretary of Commandments to Marie Louise, that he was anxious to leave France for Poland-Lithuania in the service of Marie-Louise:

> If my fortune is pushed northwards,
> If the Vistula is to see me,
> As the sky has given me hope,
> To dress me as a proud and noble Sarmatian,
> In beautiful velvets exploding in colour,
> Serious and long, lined with precious fur,
> Making my dress beautiful and gracious;
> My side armed and with a curved and rich sabre,
> To help me fight a prancing Turk,
> To transform my felt into a bonnet
> That will keep warm my neatly shaven skull
> To follow all the Polish fashion,
> Until my boots become uncomfortable to walk

Until the feasts where you say you drink too much,
And the excess of which astonished me by flattery
... And the only queen in the world for whom I was born,
I was appointed the grand St. Amantsky.[299]

Saint-Amant contemplates, not without parody, the possibility of becoming a Polish-Lithuanian noble if his Queen so decides. In his description, Polish-Lithuanian costume dazzles in its sumptuousness, but at the same time is described as excessive. Saint-Amant partly explains the exoticism of 'Sarmatian' custom in terms of geopolitical factors. Poles seem to have developed their idiosyncratic way of life due to the necessity of fighting the Turk. The idea of becoming a Pole is, of course, only a piece of rhetoric rather than a genuine resolution. Saint-Amant pre-emptively reserves the right to abandon his newly adopted country 'when the boots become too uncomfortable to walk'. The poet is clearly not serious, treating Polish-Lithuanian dress as a theatrical prop that can be taken up and relinquished at will. Dressing up as a Pole is thus a form of hypothetical masquerade in which one puts on a mask in order to mark what is truly the self. For Saint-Amant, the mockery of Polishness defines Frenchness as its antithetical double.

Another savant of the day, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchess of Montpensier (1627–1693), seems to have apprehended the Polish-Lihtuanian entry to Paris through the lens of theatrical performance. In her memoir, Montpensier discussed Opaliński's cortège in a manner that was somewhat more positive in tone than Motteville's diatribe. After complaining about the

[299] Epistre diversifiée à Monsieur Desnoyers, secretaire des commandemens de la serenissime reine de Pologne, in Marc-Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant, *Œuvres complètes de Saint-Amant*, vol. 1 (Paris: P. Jannet, 1855), 430. 'Si vers le Nord ma fortune est poussée, / Si la Vistule à mes yeux se fait voir, / Comme le ciel m'en a donné l'espoir, / De me vestir, en noble et fier Sarmate, / D'un beau velours, dont la couleur esclate, / Qui, grave et long, sur un poil precieux, / Rende mon port superbe et gracieux; / D'armer mon flanc d'un courbe et riche sabre, / De m'agrandir sur un turc qui se cabre, / De transformer mon feutre en un bonnet / Qui tienne chaud mon crane razé net, / De suivre en tout la polonoise mode, / Jusqu' à la botte au marcher incommode / Jusqu'aux festins où tu dis qu'on boit tant, / Et dont l'excès m'estonne en me flatant' / … Et pour [la reine] seule au monde je nasquy, / Je sois nommé le gros Saint-Amantsky.'

long delay before the procession commenced, the duchess moved to her judgment of this event: 'There have been many relations that I enjoyed for the detail of their description: all I will say is that the Polish manner of clothing is very different to ours; we all watched this ceremony as a very beautiful masquerade.'[300] Montpensier saw the procession as a particularly successful courtly performance. The cortège may have reminded her of some recent *ballet des nations*, in which Polish-Lithuanian costume was used together with Hungarian, Turkish and Persian dress.[301]

Such cross-cultural masquerade was explicitly theatrical; indeed, there were a number of contemporary plays that put Polishness on stage. For instance, the comedy, *The Fake Pole or the Cheeky Widow* ('Le feint Polonois ou la veuve impertinente') written by the actor Noël Le Breton de Hauteroche in 1686, uses Polish-Lithuanian costume as a prop that focalises the play's plot. In one key scene, the main protagonist, La Franchise, dresses up as a Pole to help him in a romantic affair with his beloved, Marianna. This initially seemed a good idea because, as the text makes clear, 'in Paris, there are many dressed in this way'. La Franchise thus hoped that he would be able to get to her lover unrecognised. But instead of making things easier for the illicit couple, more trouble ensues. Marianna's friend mistakes La Franchise for a Turk, and refuses him access to Marianna's house. In response, La Franchise complains: 'the costume does not look bad on me, but it makes people believe I am a true masquerader. I no longer dare show my face dressed like this in the streets: everybody stops their business to look at me, and children

[300] 'Il en a été fait trop de relations pour que je m'amuse au detail d'une description: toute ce que j'en dirai est que la manière de leurs habits, toute différente de la nôtre, nous tit regarder cette cérémonie comme une mascaraed fort mágnifique.' Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans de Montpensier, *Mémoires de Mlle de Montpensier...: Collationnés sur le manuscrit autographe* (s.n., 1858), 131.

[301] Ellen R. Welch, 'The Specter of the Turk in Early Modern French Court Entertainments', *L'Esprit Créateur* 53, no. 4 (2013): 84–97. Ágnes Fülemile, 'Dress and Image: Vizualising Ethnicity in European Popular Graphics – Some Remarks on the Antecedents of Etnic Caricature', *Images of the Other in Ethnic Caricatures of Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Diagnosław Demski, and Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska (Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences), 34.

follow me yelling as if they shouted after masked people during carnival'.[302] This implies that dressing as a Pole in France could easily arouse hostility as well as curiosity.

Theatre historian Katrin Sieg has described this sort of cross-cultural theatrical performance as 'ethnomasquerade'. Through mimicking the appearance, gestures and speech of foreign peoples, ethnomasquarade is the 'theatrical embodiment of other ethnicities by a subject that thereby exercises power and simultaneously hides it'.[303] Although masquerading as a Pole was ostensibly a commentary on difference, it was also an exercise of power in which French self-importance was assumed through representation. Practices like this as well as the exoticising images and disparaging commentaries about Polish-Lithuanian customs analysed above effectively foregrounded Frenchness, a discourse of cultural and political centrality that was reaffirmed in opposition to its perceived margins. In this performance of geopolitical status, the periphery made the centre, and the centre made the periphery. While the liminal Poland-Lithuania entered centre stage only as a supporting actor, it seems that the leading actors were not able to put on the show without this support.

[302] 'Il [ce déguissement] ne me fait point de mal; mais il me fait passer pour vrai Carême-prenant. Je n'oserais montrer mon nez dans les rues: tout le monde s'arrête pour me regarder et les enfants me suivent en criant après moi, comme ils crient après les masques durant le carnaval …' Quoted in Mieczysław Brahmer, 'Z dziejów kostjumu polskiego wśród obcych', in *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci Leona Pinińskiego*, vol. 1 (Lviv: Gubrynowicz, 1936), 117. According to Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611), 'Carême-prenant' translates as 'Shrove Tuesday'. http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/search/162l.html

[303] Katrin Sieg, 'Ethno-Maskerade: Identitätsstrategien zwischen Multikultur und Nationalismus im Deutschen Theater', *Frauen in der Literaturwissenschaft*, no. 49 (December 1996): 20. See also Kader Konuk, 'Ethnomasquerade in Ottoman-European Encounters. Reenacting Lady Mary Wortley Montagu', *Criticism* 46, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 393–414.

Chapter 3

Outsider-Insiders:
Perceptions of Polishness in the Dutch Republic

> One might say that the sovereignty of Empire itself is realised at the margins, where borders are flexible and identities are hybrid and fluid. It would be difficult to say which is more important to Empire, the centre or the margins.
>
> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, 39

Traveller Jan Jansz Struys, author of *The Perilous and Most Unhappy Voyages* (1676),[304] observed an unusually cruel incident while traversing Persia in 1671. The 'horrible spectacle', as the author named this gruesome episode, one of the most memorable in the entire book, concerned the punitive mutilation of an enslaved Polish woman.[305] The punishment was inflicted by the woman's Persian master (and husband), and in its brutality horrified Struys beyond belief. The reason for this retribution was unknown to the author; he could not determine 'whether [the Polish woman] had som private Quarrel with [her master], or that she was conscious of som misbehaviour to him'. Yet rather than investigating the motive, the author relishes in the narrating the event's cruelty in detail. Struys's description stands out in its dramatic effect and is worth citing in full:

> The Man having as was said permission to punish her at his own Discretion had already provided a Wooden Cross, upon which, with the help of his Servants, he bound her fast, being mother

[304] Jan Jansz Struys, *Drie Aanmerkelijke En Seer Rampspoedige Reysen ...* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1676), 286–87.

[305] All quotes after the contemporaneous English translation: Jan Jansz Struys, *The Perillous and Most Unhappy Voyages ...* (London: Samuel Smith, 1683), 270–71.

> naked, and with his own hands flea'd her whilst yet living. I stood my self all the while at the Door with a great Company of Men, Women and Children, and heard her cry out most bitterly. Yet none thought that his cruelty was of so high nature till we saw the Carcase, thrown out into the streets where it lay an hour or two, and afterwards by his order was dragged into the Fields, to be devoured of the Eagles, and other Birds of prey: but he not satisfied herewith took the Skin and nailed it upon the Wall for a Monument and Warning to his other Wives, which were 12 in number, who never saw it but trembled, as indeed I my self did, so often as I went by the House, or passed by that way.[306]

The horror of the narrative description is magnified by the inclusion of an engraved image (Fig. 3.1), which focuses on the story's most dire aspects: the flaying and the displaying of the flayed skin. At the right, among exotic ceramics and tiles, the merciless master flays the body of his wife tied to a crucifix. As if undressing her, the man smoothly pulls up the skin on the victim's right thigh, unveiling the open flesh. Horribly abused, the woman is helpless against her master's sentence, her left arm incapacitated by the grip of a servant. Her eyes gaze up in despair, as if imagining a looming death. The cruelty of the act indeed makes a sorry sight. Even the servant who holds the woman's flayed foot frowns at the sight of this gruesome punishment.

If the engraving's right register depicts a bodily harassment, the image's left section visualises the aftermath of this act. There, the woman's flayed skin hangs on three hooks pinned to the wall. The hammer used for this purpose lies underneath, emphasising the recentness of this atrocity. The master points to the flayed skin as a warning to his other wives who gather around the ghastly memento. A woman weeps in the foreground. A dog coming down the stairs, too, is grieved, its head and ears cast down. Only the master does not partake in the grief. The flayed skin hangs next to a cabinet filled with ceramics, inviting comparisons with inanimate objects.

[306] Ibid.

Human skin is displayed as an exotic trophy, an impression strengthened by the open curtain, which solicits the beholder to act as a voyeur. By visibly separating the worlds of representation and viewership, the engraving magnifies the assumed contrast between the viewers of the print and the cruel Persian despot whose grim actions dominate the image. This rhetoric of dissimilitude is simultaneously taken for granted and reinforced by the spectacle of brutality laid bare for the viewer. In the words of historian Benjamin Schmidt, the image of the Polish woman's anguish in Struys's *Voyages*, like many other illustrations in Dutch travel narratives of this period, creates the picture 'of sensuality and suffering, of violence and torture, of titillating crime and grisly punishment [that] point[s] toward a world seemingly apart from Europe.'[307] It is a world of exotic alterity.

The wretched Polish woman is also an outsider, but she is the victim of oriental violence, rather than a part of the Persian culture that inflicts it. Her identification as a Pole plays an important role in Struys's narrative. By arousing the sympathies of the viewer, she mediates between the beholder's world and the world of purported exoticism. In fact, the third book of *Voyages* is full of references to the Poles that Struys claims to have met in Persia.[308] The author explains why he should have come across so many inhabitants of a remote country, located not only a long distance from the Netherlands, but even further away from the Safavid Empire. As Struys reports, 'Poles … are commonly stole by the Dagestan Tartars' and brought to slave markets in Persia.[309] The Polish woman flayed by a Persian master likely was one such captive. Confirming this inference, Struys's written narrative renders the Polish woman as an unwilling subject of Persian mores, one eager to escape the country. Himself a member of Polish-

[307] Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 166.

[308] See, for example, Struys, *Voyages*, 229, 235, 243, 249, 254, 255, 272.

[309] Ibid., 272. On Tartar raids on Poland, see also p. 229.

Lithuanian ambassadorial retinue, Struys describes the unfortunate woman's cry for liberation in these words:

> She came to my Patron the Polish Ambassador, first making a large Demonstration of her State, and of her Friends and Family in Poland, she requested that my Lord would vouchsafe her his Protection, till such time as she could meet with an opportunity to convey her self clandestinely home into her own Countrey.'[310]

The ambassador agreed, but the woman's husband managed to discover her whereabouts, and, having bribed a local judge, got the wife back under his power. The punishment began immediately.

The engraving of the flayed Polish woman is particularly suggestive in marking Poles as culturally liminal: on the one hand the woman's abused body inhabits the space of exotic alterity, on the other, it does not belong there. This chapter takes a cue from this ambiguous representation to consider the role played by visual images of Polishness in constructing Dutch responses to cultural liminality and exoticism. Deemed outsider-insiders rather than exotic strangers, Poles inspired portrayals that oscillate between familiarity and strangeness, between localness and curiosity. Examining a range of Dutch images of Polishness, this chapter argues that such representations played an important role in attempts to understand the place of the United Provinces in Europe and the wider world. Economic historians have long positioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in a peripheral relation to the Dutch Republic, a country at the centre of seventeenth-century world economy.[311] The images addressed here suggest, however, that economic subordination did not simply translate into cultural irrelevance. Despite the

[310] Ibid., 270.

[311] For a good overview, see Marian Malowist, 'The Economic and Social Development of the Baltic Countries from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries', *The Economic History Review* 12, no. 2 (1959): 177–89.

asymmetrical relationship between the Polish-Lithuanian periphery and the Dutch centre, the elites of the United Provinces were tacitly dependent on Poland-Lithuania for their own self-image. The aim of this chapter is to examine how Dutch representations of Polishness reveal unexpected interdependencies.

Almost Different but Not Quite

The story of the Polish woman's tragic demise functions not only as a marker of difference between the Dutch reader and the world of Persian exoticism, but also as a reminder of what lies in between. Poland-Lithuania's location in the borderland between west and east marks it as a liminal place in Struys's narrative: a place open to non-European influences. As an indication of possible transgressive impact on the inhabitants of this peripheral country, the author gives an example of the Polish-Lithuanian ambassador whom he served. Of Georgian origin rather than a Pole, the ambassador became a trusted envoy of the 'Polish king' because of his ability to have a foot both in Poland-Lithuania and in Persia, and the skill to navigate seamlessly between these disparate contexts. Yet according to Struys, the ambassador retained an eastern inkling for extravagance: 'On the 2 of November came the Sister of the Ambassador, and his Brother with a great Retinue and Pomp: their Reception was with an Extravagant Banquet, which dured several days. So long as this Junketting lasted, was such Gluttony, Drunkness and Prodigality, yea such beastliness shown, that I almost abhorred the name of a Christian.'[312] Struys is not even sure whether the man is truly Christian. One of the senior Polish members of the embassy purportedly reported to him that the ambassador 'is not so good a Christian as you think, but a light vain

[312] Struys, *Voyages*, 242.

Georgian'.[313]

The ambassador's erratic behaviour thus typified both the benefits and the pitfalls of cultural liminality. As he belonged both in the west and east, the ambassador was a useful mediator between cultures, but there was a danger he could turn his back on Poland-Lithuania to guard his own interests. Struys believed that just this kind of duplicity played a role when the ambassador allowed the Poles in his retinue to be 'reduced to such poverty that they went up and down like Beggars, being ashamed to com into honest company'.[314] The ambassador did not look askance at the pathetic state of his entourage, taking care only of his own needs. Not only did the ambassador strip the Poles of their honour, but he also abused them physically. So abhorrent was the ambassador's conduct that he is even said to have assassinated one of the Polish Gentlemen in his entourage who 'as Assistant in this Ambassage [was] equally impowered to treat with the Ministers of State at the Persian Court'; all this to secure absolute authority over the legation for himself.

Struys presents the ambassador as an utmost opportunist and a failed convert. We read that he 'dispatche[d] his Brother to the King at Ispahan, to supplicate that they might both be circumscribed, pretending that now knowing better things than he had hitherto don, therefore could not have Peace or Rest in Conscience … if he were not admitted as a member in Mahometanism.'[315] Under such influence, some Poles, too, began to err. The author claims to have heard of one Pole who became a Muslim: 'a Renegado' who 'renounc[ed] the Christian Faith and bec[a]m[e] a Proselyte in Persia'.[316] Two other Poles serving as 'the Ambassadors

[313] Ibid., 241.

[314] Ibid., 243.

[315] Ibid., 244.

[316] Ibid., 254.

Gentlemen' are accused of unlawful sexual intercourse with a Muslim woman.[317] Struys gives a sense that these transgressive actions might have resulted from the proximity of Poland-Lithuania to the Muslim states in the east. Yet rather than dwelling on the examples that pointed to the Commonwealth's leaning towards alterity, the author prefers to emphasise his affinity with the Poles he met.

Pointing to the connections between the Dutch and Poles, Struys presents these two societies as members of the same cultural circle united by 'prudence and civility'. The Polish man assassinated by the ambassador was, in the author's words, 'a Gentleman of a brave conduct, and withall of a meek temper, having purchased the Love even of those that seemed to be his Lot-enemies for his prudent and civil deportment, He had lived in Amsterdam, and spoke good Nether-dutch.'[318] Struys's praise of the Polish gentleman's good character and his familiarity with Dutch culture is a trope that reverberates throughout the *Voyages*. Similar praise is given to a Polish surgeon who cured the ambassador from a grave illness. Struys not only acknowledges his skill, but also eulogises 'his extraordinary Civilities'.[319] Other Poles are mentioned specifically because of their association with the Netherlands, a connection that would likely appeal to the Dutch reader. In the city of Shamakhi, Struys allegedly met 'a Polish Gentlewoman by birth, and a Christian [whose] father was an Amsterdammer, by name Iohn Flusius, who had a Command of Horse under [John] Casimire K[ing] of Poland'.[320] Foregrounding the woman's connections with the Dutch metropolis, the author adds that she

[317] Ibid., 267.

[318] Ibid., 243.

[319] Ibid., 250.

[320] Ibid., 229.

'spoke very good Low-dutch'.[321] She is effectively appreciated as an exemplar of a Polish-Dutch special connection. A similar role is ascribed to a young Pole who proved helpful to the Dutch in Persia:

> This young Gentleman having shown us more than ordinary favour, I thought my self obliged to do what lay in my Power to retaliate his kindness, and therefore gave him Letters to the Dutch Consul at Smyrna and to some eminent Merchants of our Nation, desiring if he should chance to be necessitated or at a loss for Money they would please to assist him, he having upon his departure no more than 20 Crowns. I gave them also a full Demonstration of what he had done for the Dutch Slaves, as also an account of his Worth in respect of his Race and Descent, he being of one of the noblest Families in the Countrey.'[322]

In their sympathy towards the Dutch, the Poles whom Struys meets throughout his journey are considered by the author to have been reliable allies in a world of Persian alterity. Poles in Struys's narrative were better predisposed to function in a Persian society than the Dutch author, given their closer proximity to this eastern state, yet they did not fit in. Paradoxically, it is as if Poland-Lithuania's contiguity with the east sharpened awareness of what made the Poles in Struys's *Voyages* seem familiar to the Dutch. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth may have been at the crossroads between the east and west, but it nonetheless belonged firmly in the latter. Struys's Poles effectively typify a culture that was simultaneously familiar and foreign—a culture that sat halfway between the United Provinces and the exotic Persia.

This liminal status of Poland-Lithuania reverberates in visual representations of this vast country's inhabitants. The most famous of these is of course Rembrandt's *Polish Rider* (c. 1655)

[321] Ibid., 230.

[322] Ibid., 255.

in the Frick Collection (Fig. 3.2). That it depicts a young man in Polish-Lithuanian costume is beyond doubt.[323] In full accordance with the Polish-Lithuanian fashion of the mid-seventeenth century, the youth wears a fur-lined tunic (*żupan*) made of quilted silk. The look is completed by a red hat with a fur-covered brim (*kuczma*), red trousers matching the colour of the hat, a silk sash, and yellow boots that reach halfway up the calf. The rider is endowed with two eastern-style sabres—one hanging from the belt, the other strapped to the saddle. This is in addition to the typical arms of the Polish-Lithuanian light cavalry: a bow with a quiver full of arrows. To complement these grizzly weapons, the man holds a war hammer in his right hand. The Polish-Lithuanian provenance of the rider's costume is accepted by the majority of modern historians of costume and art,[324] who in turn recognise a significant Dutch interest in images of Polish soldiers. What is less certain is whether Rembrandt's painting is a *tronie* (a character study), or whether it was commissioned as a portrait, and, if so, by whom. This question has long divided art historians, with no definitive conclusions being reached.[325] But if there is an interpretation of Rembrandt's *Polish Rider* that does not provoke immediate rebuttal, it is that the maker of this portrayal lived in a city—Amsterdam—where visitors from Poland-Lithuania were a common sight.

Poles were indeed frequent visitors to Dutch cities. Many young Polish-Lithuanian Protestants studied at Dutch universities, especially Leiden where between the 1550s and the

[323] Zdzisław Żygulski Jr., "Rembrandt's 'Lisowczyk': A Study of Costume and Weapons," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie* 6, no. 2/3 (1965): 42–67.

[324] See B. P. J. Broos, 'Rembrandt's Portrait of a Pole and His Horse', *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 7, no. 4 (1974): 193–218.

[325] For recent analysis, see Ernst Van De Wetering, 'Rembrandt (with Later Additions), The Polish Rider', in *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 5, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 535–50; Thomas M. Prymak, 'Rembrandt's "Polish Rider" in Its East European Context', *The Polish Review* 56, no. 3 (2011): 159–86; Zdzisław Żygulski, 'Further Battles for the "Lisowczyk" (Polish Rider) by Rembrandt', *Artibus et Historiae* 21, no. 41 (2000): 197–205.

1650s Poles constituted one of the largest foreign student bodies.[326] In Franeker, a Pole Jan Makowski (Johannes Maccovius) was professor of theology from 1616 to 1644.[327] Besides study, some Poles visited the Netherlands on business trips.[328] Many decided to settle permanently in the United Provinces. Of those, the most numerous group were members of the various Protestant minorities that inhabited the officially Catholic Commonwealth.[329] When in 1658, the Polish Brethren (also known as Socinians) were forced to leave Poland-Lithuania, they moved their prominent press from Raków to Amsterdam.[330] Amsterdam also became the new home for the Polish-Lithuanian Ashkenazi Jews escaping pogroms in the Ukraine, especially following the Khmelnytsky massacres in 1648.[331]

Dutch city dwellers were not only likely to bump into a Pole on the street, but they could also spot images of them on the façades of buildings. One of such image is a stone tablet that originally decorated a house on Schapensteeg (Fig. 3.3).[332] Here, a moustached man mounted on a horse wears a long tunic similar to the one in Rembrandt's *Polish Rider*. A flamboyant hat gives the man a stern look, while a scimitar hanging from his waist reminds the beholder of the man's prowess in combat. The tablet is marked 'POOLSE CAVELYIR' (*Polish Cavalier*), indicating that it depicts a Polish soldier, potentially of noble stock. While real Poles came from far away, the *Polish Cavalier* from Schapensteeg was no stranger to passers-by in this familiar Amsterdam

[326] Joanna Leska-Ślęzak, *Polacy w Holandii: przeszłość i teraźniejszość* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2003), 95.

[327] Ludwik Chmaj, *Bracia Polscy: ludzie, idee, wpływy* (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1957), 219–20.

[328] Broos, 'Rembrandt's Portrait of a Pole and His Horse', 207.

[329] Janusz Tazbir, 'Polsko-niderlandzkie kotakty wyznaniowe w XVII w.', in *Niderlandyzm w sztuce polskiej*, ed. Teresa Hrankowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1995), 40.

[330] Andrzej Borowski, 'Związki kulturalno-literackie między Polską a Niderlandami w XVI-XVII w.', in *Niderlandyzm w sztuce polskiej*, ed. Teresa Hrankowska (Warsaw: PWN, 1995), 34.

[331] Steven Nadler, *Rembrandt's Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 30.

[332] Today at the depot of the Rijksmuseum. Onno W. Boers, *De gevelstenen van Amsterdam* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2007), 290.

street. Made of stone and originally painted over in garish colours, this is an avatar of so many Polish-Lithuanian men who were regularly encountered in Amsterdam's busy streets and squares. Walking through the narrow street of Schapensteeg and minding their daily business, passers-by were likely to view the *Polish Cavalier* with curiousity. But the curiosity with which this stone effigy was met would give over to a sense of localness. Those who spotted the *Polish Cavalier* would have likely looked back at him the next time they passed by, gradually habituating and personalising urban space, thus building an image of their own city.[333] The foreign made the local in this habitual exchange of gazes between the beholder and the sculpted effigy. To this day, there survives a high number of images of Poles painted, drawn and etched by the Republic's busiest artists, suggesting a great deal of interest in such representations.

Among the artists who recurrently returned to this subject was the painter of the *Polish Rider*, Rembrandt. His sketch of a Pole (Fig. 3.4), one of many he drew, is a study of dress; the costume makes the man here. The exoticism of the plumed fur hat and sabre blends with the unkempt character of the garb to create a near-ethnographic representation of Polishness. The point of Rembrandt's image, possibly intended for eventual use in a painting or a print, was to entice viewers with something that they likely had already seen and yet would nonetheless find curious. Indeed, a plethora of Dutch depictions of Poles still extant today suggests that early modern Dutch collectors treated Polishness as a curiosity available for commodification and household consumption. Evidence from the Dutch inventories that specifically describe the subjects of portraits and *tronies* as 'Poles' signals a familiarity with Polish-Lithuanian costume and custom, as well as the appeal of Polishness. A typical description is brief, but instructive—in a fashion characteristic of this kind of legal document. The 1645 inventory of Willem

[333] On the city's image and imageability, see Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), 9–13.

Hendricksz. and his wife Delia Hoogenhuys, for example, records '1 portrait of a Polish nobleman'.[334] Given the lack of detailed information, this identification is probably based on the type of dress that the sitter wore. Distinct from Dutch attire, Polish-Lithuanian costume thus acted as the marker of difference that was easily identifiable and comprehensible. Other depictions of Poles are identified with the same brevity and blunt precision. A character study, belonging to Josina van Nesten, is listed in a Haarlem inventory of 1662 as 'a Polish *tronie* with an ebony inner frame'.[335] Painter and art dealer Gerrit Uylenburg also owned a similar a *tronie*, itemised as 'a Polish trumpeter by Jan Bor' in the 1675 inventory of Uylenburg's property.[336] In both cases, a quick look at the represented figures allowed the inventory-taker to identify the model as a 'Pole'.

The popularity of 'Polish' subject matter appears to have developed in a context where the Dutch beholders were familiar enough with Polish-Lithuanian dress to be able to identify it in a picture. The very availability of the image of Polishness in the United Provinces, strengthened by the continuous presence in the country of the Poles themselves, suggests a significant interest in Polish-Lithuanian outlanders. In fact, it is seldom the case that visual representations presented the difference between Poles and the Dutch as unbridgeable. Instead, many images evoke the malleable character of Polishness. A 1639 painting by Jan Miense Moleaner (Fig. 3.5) conveys such ambivalence with a playful twist. The image renders the final scene from Gerbrand

[334] '1 contrefeytsel van een Poolse eedelman'. Municipal Archives Amsterdam (GAA), DBK 351, fol. 64v-69v, 20 May 1645.

[335] 'Een Poolse tronij met een ebben binne lijst'. Het Gelders Archief, Arnhem (GA), Haarlem, not. H. van Gellinck huysen, NA341, fol. 3, 4 September 1662, inventory of Josina van Nesten.

[336] 'Poolse trompetter van Jan Bor *f* 54:-:-'. Municipal Archives Amsterdam (GAA), DBK 879, part 340, 16 October 1675, inventory of Gerrit Uylenburg. See also Abraham Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare: Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 5 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1918), no. 140.

Bredero's play *Lucelle* of 1622,[337] which presents a story of the eponymous daughter of a wealthy merchant who falls in love with her father's servant, Ascagnes, who at the end is revealed to be a Polish prince. Moleander depicts the entry of an impulsive and brash emissary of Polish king, captain Baustruldes, who announces Ascagnes's real identity. The painter follows the script closely, but exploits the dual character of Polishness evident in the play in a more straightforward manner than the play.

Two modes of Polishness are given a voice in the painting. First is epitomised by Baustruldes, portrayed at the left. He comes to the events at the time when Ascagnes and Lucelle have drunk a poison (in reality a sleeping drought) to avoid a scandal raised from their morganatic love. They lie together, seemingly dead in each other's arms. Baustruldes arrives to the scene with much drama and emotion to announce that Ascagnes is in fact the son of a 'Polish king'. The piece of paper in his hand is a document confirming Ascagnes's royal descent. Despite his high birth, Baustruldes is depicted as a figure of irascibility and recklessness, a recurrent trope in the literary and visual representations of early modern Poles. He wears extravagant costume and a turban, communicating his difference from local people. Waving a piece of paper in one hand, and a threatening hammer in the other, the emissary seeks attention from the other men in the painting. This is a crucial game-changing moment of the play. The men in the painting are shown in a moment of disbelief as they doubt the revelation of Ascagnes's royal lineage. The Polish captain loses his temper and threatens Lucelle's father

[337] See the exhibition catalogue Dennis P. Weller, ed., *Jan Miense Molenaer: Painter of the Dutch Golden Age* (New York: Hudson Hills, 2002), 153–55.

Carpone. Baustruldes impulsively tells the merchant to accept the news, otherwise he 'would strike [Carpone] down with [his] hammer'.[338]

In this stereotypical depiction of Polishness, Baustruldes is very different from Ascagnes, the Polish prince who not only wears the local dress but who also behaves and speaks like the local people. While Baustruldes is rash and dangerous, Ascagnes—the assimilated Pole—is about to marry into the family of a local merchant. The beholder receives these contradictory images of Polishness in one image. The representation perpetuates the stereotype of Polish irascibility, but simultaneously suspends it by bringing another character for counterbalance. Despite Poles' alterity, they are not different enough to treat their costume and behaviour as the markers of absolute difference. Moleaner's painting plays with the possibility of moulding Polish men into Dutchmen. Ascagnes's difference is only recognized once exposed by Baustruldes. Some Poles, it seems, could be reformed.

Images of Polish difference coexisted with images emphasising similarities between Dutchmen and Poles who lived in a country located just a few days away by merchant's ship, and who were frequent visitors to the Dutch Republic. The ambiguous status of Polishness in the United Provinces is aptly characterized by the inversion of Homi Bhabha's oft-cited phrase, 'almost the same but not quite',[339] into its negative double, *almost different but not quite*. In a non-colonial form of domination, by which the United Provinces subordinated the lesser developed Poland-Lithuania, Dutch mercantile elites could infiltrate the Commonwealth without limiting the political sovereignty of this peripheral state. Polish-Lithuanian cultural alterity was no threat to merchant capitalism. Inverting Bhabha, Polishness in the Dutch Republic was

[338] 'Ick sloech u liever met de hamer onder voet'. Gerbrand A. Bredero, *Lucelle* (Rotterdam: Pieter van Waesbergen, 1622), Act II, Scene 5.

[339] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

constructed around the ambivalence of incomplete exclusion: while conveying a sense of Dutch superiority in which Poles would appear curious, Polishness would nonetheless never be considered as exotic. Poles were familiar enough to warrant a prominent place in cultural representations. At the same time, they were depicted as strange and difficult. This ambiguous image resonated with Dutch economic interests. Against Polish-Lithuanian recklessness, there was Dutch prudence. Against irascibility, Dutch moderation. Yet while Poles were regarded as strange, they also were familiar, never fully exotic, nor truly unknown. Poles were *almost* different from the Dutch, but *not quite*.

Poles and the 'Mother Trade'

Of all Dutchmen, Amsterdammers were perhaps the most accustomed to the image of Polishness.[340] A world capital of commerce at the time, Amsterdammers saw many Poles wandering around, at times leaving a permanent imprint on the urban fabric. The ubiquitous stone tablets on house façades mark this presence, depicting Poles as buildings' emblems. This includes the *Polish Cavalier* from Schapensteeg discussed above (Fig. 3.3). Another such stone tablet adorns the edifice on 322 Kerkstraat (Fig. 3.6).

The relief depicts a moustached man in red tunic (*ferezja*), left arm on his hip, right hand leaning on a war hammer. The man's sombre harshness attests to his martial skill. His long navy blue cape hangs down to the ground, and a sash is tied around the man's waist. A white turban covers his head, while long leather boots are drawn over his feet. Identification of this figure was not left to chance. To assist the beholder in identifying the effigy, the linguistic signifier 'POOL' (*Pole*) is engraved on the bottom of the tablet. The date on the top of the niche

[340] Broos, 'Rembrandt's Portrait of a Pole and His Horse', 208–9.

additionally settles the production of the tablet as 1688. The message conveyed here is one of the *Pole*'s curiosity. This impression is magnified by the inclusion of a turban that did not in fact form the conventional costume of any social group in Poland-Lithuania. The effigy presents a striking appearance, but since this and similar images were glimpsed daily by Amsterdam residents, these representations became part of the local scenery. They had the potential to normalise Polish-Lithuanian dress and custom for local beholders. Polish-Lithuanian dress, seen through the dual prism of sartorial extravagance and quotidian experience, was consequently a medium that vacillated between strangeness and familiarity.

The building on which the Kerkstraat Pole appears adds to the message. Once a warehouse,[341] this edifice was most likely used for the storage of timber, forestry products and grain. These staples were the main export commodities of Poland-Lithuania. They were also essential for Dutch prosperity, which depended on unimpeded access to these materials for food security and ship-building, both of which were the building blocks of Dutch civic order and mercantile success. To secure a steady flow of these base commodities, Amsterdam merchants ran trading houses in major Polish-Lithuanian cities, with their largest accumulation in the biggest Baltic port, Danzig.[342] The Dutch had come to dominate overseas trade in Danzig by the end of the sixteenth century.[343] In the 1640s, Dutch companies and mixed Dutch-Danzig companies held about eighty percent of Danzig's overseas trade.[344] The Kerkstraat building most

[341] Boers, *De gevelstenen van Amsterdam*, 144.

[342] Maria Bogucka, 'Veranderingen in de Baltische Handel in de Zeventiende Eeuw: Transacties Tussen Hollandse Kooplieden En de Poolse Adel', *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 87 (1995): 253–58; Michael North, 'Kunst En Handel, Culturele Betrekkingen Tussen Nederland En Steden in Het Zuidelijk Oostzeegebied', *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 87 (1995): 259–66.

[343] Milja van Tielhof, *The 'Mother of All Trades': The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam From the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 137; Milja van Tielhof, *De Hollandse graanhandel, 1450-1570: Koren op de Amsterdamse molen* (The Hague: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995), 177–180.

[344] Maria Bogucka, 'Dutch Merchants' Activities in Gdansk in the First Half of the XVIIth Century', in *Baltic Affairs: Relations Between the Netherlands and North-Eastern Europe, 1500-1800*, ed. J. Ph. S Lemmink and

likely belonged to an Amsterdam merchant who was engaged in trade with Poland-Lithuania. Making a reference to the Baltic trade, the effigy of the Kerkstraat *Pole* effectively acknowledged the Commonwealth's importance for Amsterdam's ever expanding economy.

The connection between Amsterdam and Poland-Lithuania was made manifest on the façades of many other buildings in the city. One of those was a warehouse on Prins Hendrikkade (Fig. 3.7), which, too, was adorned with the figure of a Pole.[345] The inscription engraved at the pedestal of the niche, which reads 'D•POOL' (*De Pool*), dispels any ambiguity. Again, a Polish-Lithuanian stock character is depicted in full military splendour on the façade of a building that was used for the storage of base commodities from the Commonwealth. Like the figure on Kerkstraat, he sports a moustache, carries a war hammer, and wears a *żupan*, a cape and long boots. In contrast with the Kerkstraat *Pole*, however, he dons a large hat rimmed with fur. This appearance is more in tune with how Poles were seen in Europe at that time. The travel account of French petty nobleman Gaspard de Tende, likely written in the 1660s during the author's stay in Poland and published in French in 1686, offered a standard summary of Polish-Lithuanian dress, which many other authors in Europe drew upon.[346] De Tende's description fits the image of the Pole from Prins Hendrikkade perfectly: 'The Polanders are generaly very fond of Magnificent Habits after their Mode: Most of them wear very handsom Boots, the heels of which are shod with Iron, a Furr'd Cap, and Vests that reach to their Mid-leg, and are Furred in Cold Weather.'[347] Conveying this image, the effigy from Prins Hendrikkade also perpetuated it.

J.S.A.M. van Koningsbrugge (Nijmegen: Institute for Northern and Eastern European Studies, 1991), 24–25.

[345] Today on the façade of a Roman Catholic elementary school at 2 Poolstraat. Boers, *De gevelstenen van Amsterdam*, 177.

[346] See Jan Antoni Wilder, *Okiem cudzoziemca: Ze wspomnień cudzoziemców o dawnej Polsce* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1959), 89.

[347] Gaspard de Tende, *An Account of Poland* (London, 1698), 186.

Given the mercantile character of the buildings on both Kerkstraat and Prins Hendrikkade, it is likely that a passer-by would have seen men in Polish-Lithuanian costume hustling around these premises. Through contact with these men and with the sculpted image on the façade, locals would have been likely to associate Polishness with the Baltic trade. As Dutch merchants kept close relations with Danzig, so did Polish-Lithuanian merchants maintain a continuous presence in the United Provinces' most cosmopolitan city. Some of them traded at the Amsterdam stock exchange. As Filips von Zesen wrote in his description of Amsterdam:

> In this Bourse, the entire world can be seen trading. In addition to the high- and low-German merchants, one can easily find Poles, Hungarians, Italians, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Muscovites, Turks, and sometimes Indians and other foreign nations.[348]

The types of goods traded by Poles are visualised in the tablet that once adorned the building on 42 Spuistraat (Fig. 3.8).[349] Hinting at the dwelling of a Baltic merchant, or the possible use of this edifice as a warehouse, the tablet represents a 'Polish barge' (*Poolse Kamay*). This was a large structure built of timber logs, packed in with barrels loaded with grain and timber. These barges were carried from the Polish interior down the Vistula River to Danzig, where the timber logs were dismantled and sold to the Dutch along with the cargo.[350] The tablet depicts one such barge, filled with the typical export products of Poland-Lithuania. The grain fills the left side of the barge, while timber can be seen at the right. It is steered by raftsmen

[348] 'Auf diesem Kaufhause verhandelt man fast die gantse Welt. Alhier finden sich / neben den Hoch- und Niederdeutschen knaufleuten / auch Pohlen / Ungern / Wälsche / Franzosen / Spanier / Moscoviter / Persien / Türken / ja zu weilen auch Indier und andere fremde völker.' Philipp von Zesen, *Beschreibung Der Stadt Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Nosche, 1664), 233.

[349] The original tablet is in a semi-derelict state. A reconstruction, however, was made thanks to a drawing at the Dutch Royal Antiquarian Society (Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap). Boers, *De gevelstenen van Amsterdam*, 210–11.

[350] Marian Małowist, 'Merchant Credit and the Putting-out System: Rural Production during the Middle Ages', in *Western Europe, Eastern Europe and World Development 13th-18th Centuries: Collection of Essays of Marian Małowist*, ed. Jean Batou and Henryk Szlajfer (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 79.

equipped with long paddles, all wearing large fur hats.

Like the other stone tablets, the *Poolse Kamay* likely activated the perceptions of Dutch reliance on Polish-Lithuanian base commodities. The Baltic trade was so important for the Dutch that it was called the 'mother trade' (*modernegotie*).[351] Indeed, until the 1640s it accounted for three-quarters of all Dutch business abroad. The Baltic merchants in Amsterdam, known as 'de Oistersche Natie' (the eastern nation),[352] filled Dutch warehouses with agricultural and forestry products. Images such as the *Poolse Kamay* communicated and reified the existence of these close trade relations. Almost a tokenistic vignette, the Spuistraat house tablet was created in a context where the Dutch required timber to build ships for their growing maritime trade emporium, and needed a continuous inflow of grain to ensure food security for a burgeoning population. In turn, Polish-Lithuanian landowners received liquid cash, which they readily spent on luxury products, conveniently traded by the Dutch. Poland-Lithuania and the Dutch Republic were bound together in mutual economic interest. In this relation, the periphery was subject to the centre's supremacy, but simultaneously subjected the centre to overreliance on its resources. Effectively, the centrality of the Dutch Republic could not be understood without reference to Poland-Lithuania. The *Poolse Kamay*, apart from acting as a visual catalyst of an enduring mercantilist sentiment, also denotes how the Dutch benefitted from the Baltic trade. Poles were important suppliers catering to Dutch demand.

The print *Profile of Amsterdam*, engraved by Claes Jansz. Visscher in 1611 (Fig. 3.9), creates a visual narrative where the subordinate status of Poland-Lithuania has been rendered in an even more conspicuous manner. The explanatory text describes Amsterdam as 'the widely

[351] Tielhof, *The 'Mother of All Trades'*, 4.

[352] See J.G. van Dillen, *Mensen en achtergronden: Studies uitgegeven ter gelegenheid van de tachtigste jaardag van de schrijver* (Groningen: Wolters, 1964), 470–71.

renowned capital of trade of the entire world', asserting that people of all places were compelled to 'send or present in person their priceless wares to [the] Amsterdam [Maid], as if to a world-renowned empress'.[353] In support of this textual invocation, the personification of Amsterdam sits in the centre of the engraving, surrounded by a cornucopia of goods and peoples bringing merchandise to her feet. A group of figures at the right hand of the Maid (Fig. 3.10) depicts the city's main European trading partners: a Spaniard, a Frenchman, a German (*Hochdeutsch*), and an Englishman. Also in this group is a Pole, marked by number '6'. Although the Pole finds himself in important company, his depiction suggests a peripheral status. The man's body is partially obscured by western Europeans. Only his upper torso and face, adorned with a plumed hat, can be seen in their entirety. His diminished presence is overshadowed by the figures of an Englishman and Frenchman who engage in conversation with the Amsterdammer (marked by number '7') who welcomes them. The Pole is relegated to the margins of a discussion that western Europeans hold among themselves. With his head bowed down to the side, he listens in silence. While included in the group of major trade partners, he is also visibly excluded from the negotiations. He is there only as a lesser collaborator.

Diagonal lines and hatches run through the Pole's face and body, casting a shade on this figure. Withdrawn to the back, he appears removed from the scope of the Amsterdammer's main concern, occupied by the western Europeans. This visual treatment of the Polish envoy in Visscher's engraving renders a system of interdependence in which Poland-Lithuania is Amsterdam's major trade partner, albeit one that must remain in the shadows. It implies an unequal relationship between Amsterdam, the major centre of European trade, manufacturing

[353] Translations after Claudia Swan, 'Lost in Translation: Exoticism in Early Modern Holland', in *The Fascination of Persia: The Persian-European Dialogue in Seventeenth-Century Art and Contemporary Art from Tehran*, ed. Axel Langer (Zürich: Museum Rietberg, 2013), 103.

and the arts, and Poland-Lithuania, a country on Europe's eastern periphery. In marking this asymmetry obvious, Visscher's print further reinforces it by naturalising an unequal state of affairs in an iconic self-representation of Amsterdam's mercantile world hegemony.

The passivity of the Pole's comportment implies his silent acquiescence to this hegemony. Indeed, the Dutch would have not been able to control the Baltic so fully had this control not been in the interest of Polish-Lithuanian land-owning elites. In response to the rising prices of rye in the sixteenth century, Polish-Lithuanian nobility pushed the state's economy into a system of monoculture based on agricultural produce and other base commodities.[354] The Dutch were the biggest beneficiaries of this economic model as they could sell highly processed goods in Danzig to the wealthy Polish-Lithuanian nobility, and in return buy rye at bargain prices. In the already mentioned and widely read, *Relation historique de la Pologne* (1686), French traveller Gaspard de Tende unveils the mechanism that allowed the Dutch to make a fortune trading with Poland-Lithuania:

> I neither know, nor ever heard of … any place in the World where they use greater quantities of Leather: for every body wears Boots, and almost all the Gentlemen have Coaches, or Waggons cover'd with Leather, which they call *Ridevans*. Nevertheless in stead of preparing the Hides and Skins of the Cattel which they kill, they suffer Strangers to carry'em away into their own Countrys, where they Prepare them, and afterwards make the Polanders Pay dear for that which they Sold for a Trifle.[355]

Poland-Lithuania is in this account depicted as a place of easy profit, due to gullibility of inhabitants. Still in the eighteenth century, one Wilhelm Schlemüller who visited the Lithuanian

[354] Marian Małowist, 'Poland, Russia and Western Trade in the 15th and 16th Centuries', *Past & Present*, no. 13 (1958): 38; Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System: Towards a Model of the Polish Economy, 1500-1800* (London: N.L.B., 1976).

[355] Tende, *An Account of Poland*, 181.

town of Grodno (Lithuanian Grodņa, Belarusian Hrodna) during the 1752 *sejm* (Polish-Lithuanian diet) reports that 'merchants arrived from Danzig, Königsberg, Breslau and other cities because no other nation is so oblivious to its own exploitation as the Poles'.[356]

The Dutch were keen to ensure their long-lasting advantage in trade with Poland-Lithuania. In the spring of 1656, the Swedish invaded the Commonwealth, and the Polish-Lithuanian ruler John Casimir Vasa asked the States-General of the United Provinces to help by sending a fleet to Danzig. On 9 March 1656, the Dutch sent a delegation to negotiate with the Swedes. On 28 May 1656, a fleet sailed for the Baltic, and blockaded Danzig to help defend the country against Swedish invasion. Celebrated naval officer Michiel de Ruyter served as Vice Admiral on this expedition.[357] The States-General agreed to finance the Polish-Lithuanian war against Sweden, as it was in their interest to protect the 'mother trade'.[358] The importance of keeping Poland-Lithuania within the Dutch sphere of influence is emphasized in a Dutch pamphlet written in 1657—the worst year of the Polish-Swedish war, when the Swedes took Warsaw and were making territorial gains in Little Poland and Lithuania.[359] Entitled *Farcical Dialogue between Poland, Sweden and Other Potentates*,[360] this short tract collects imaginary responses of various European powers to the crisis in the Commonwealth. The Dutch

[356] Polish trans. in Jan Gintel, ed., *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce: Relacje i opinie*, vol. 2 (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 32.

[357] James Bender, *Dutch Warships in the Age of Sail, 1600-1714: Design, Construction, Careers and Fates* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2014), 86–87.

[358] The many wars in which the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth was involved during the 17th century were closely followed in Holland, especially the Second Northern War between Poland-Lithuania, Muscovy and Sweden, which took place from 1655 to 1660. See Robert I. Frost, *After the Deluge: Poland-Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Edmund Cieślak and Czesław Biernat, *History of Gdańsk* (Gdańsk: Fundacja Biblioteki Gdańskiej, 1995), 214; Tielhof, *The 'Mother of All Trades'*, 99; Francis J. Bowman, 'Dutch Diplomacy and the Baltic Grain Trade, 1600-1660', *Pacific Historical Review* 5, no. 4 (1936): 346.

[359] For an overview of these pamphlets, see Frederik Muller, *Essai d'une bibliographie neerlando-russe* (Amsterdam, 1859).

[360] *Kluchtighe t' samen-spraeck, tusschen Poolen, Sweeden en andere Potentaten* (n.p., 1657).

commentary is particularly gloomy as a Netherlander asserts that the geopolitical developments in the Baltic are not to the Republic's advantage, and therefore the Dutch must liberate Danzig from the Swedish blockade. This declaration ends on a sombre note:

> They who make profit from this situation
> Rightly earn our enmity.[361]

The Dutch vow protection of Danzig, the Republic's granary, and it is obvious that this protection is being promised out of sheer calculation and a desire to protect the profits made from Dutch-Baltic trade.

Returning to the Visscher print, I would argue that although it conveys Dutch supremacy over Poland-Lithuania, it also evades easy categorisations. Although it marginalises the position of Polish-Lithuanian envoy within the group of western European emissaries, it still positions the Pole in the group that stands in a privileged position nearest to the Amsterdam Maid. If the engraving delineates a system of connections in which Poles are dominated by the Dutch, it does so to emphasise how important Poland-Lithuania was for the Dutch economy. This visual rhetoric of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion becomes all the more apparent when the Pole is put into perspective with other bodies in the print, especially the turbaned easterners, half-naked Amerindians, furred Muscovites, armed Africans, and other exotic types. Poles' exclusion from this company withholds their association with exoticism. Their place is at the periphery of the Dutch world, rather than outside of it altogether.

The distinction between Poles and exotic peoples set forth in visually effective means in Visscher's broadsheet, offers a useful vantage point for thinking about Poland-Lithuania as an economic margin. Many scholars treat the Commonwealth as synonymous with the periphery of

[361] 'Dat onheyl wachten af, maer willen tot ons voordeel / Dantsicj versekeren, en laten aensijn oordeel, / Of dese saeck by ons soo qualijck wort gemient, / Dat wy sijn vyantschap daer door hebben verdient.'

early modern north-western Europe. Key economic historians Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein have famously used Poland-Lithuania as a model to illustrate the asymmetrical power hierarchy at play between the economic core and the fringe.[362] In this model, the Commonwealth is put in the same category with Hispanic America, since both of these economically peripheral regions exported raw materials to the economic core, in turn importing finished products (both luxury goods and primary commodities). Visscher's print complicates this analysis, however, as it reveals that there were differences in how the European periphery and the colonial periphery were perceived by the centre. Poland-Lithuania's relationship with Amsterdam was more ambiguous than the analysis of economic data would suggest. Rather than simply positioning the Polish-Lithuanian envoy within the discourse of alterity together with the more exotic peoples, Visscher places him at the centre's margin. This liminal location means that the Pole is neither here nor there, and simultaneously both here and there. Although Amsterdam merchants led Polish-Lithuanian landowners into the trap of dependency, they themselves relied on Poland-Lithuania for the sense of their own centrality in Europe and the world.

Masquerade

In some cases, Dutchness itself could be represented via the lens of Polishness. This is discernible in Ferdinand Bol's portrait of a boy around the age of ten, painted in 1656 (Fig. 3.11). Here, a local self is represented through foreign material forms. The young sitter wears a yellow silk kaftan (*żupan*), red breeches, yellow leather (*safian*) boots with no heels, and a

[362] Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy: Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 37–48; Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 128–75; Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation and Capitalism, 15th - 18th Century*, trans. Siân Reynolds, vol. 3 (London: Collins/Fontana Press, 1984), 25–57. Both Wallerstein and Braudel based their analyses on the work of Polish economic historians. See, Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*.

kalpak-type hat made of fur. This sartorial style clearly identifies the boy as a Pole.[363] With his left arm akimbo, and the right holding a war hammer braced against the thigh, the boy appears mature beyond his age. In the foreground lie typically Polish-Lithuanian attributes: arrows, a bow and a shield. An armoured breastplate and a war drum are placed next to them, ensuring that the viewer recognises that the sitter is masquerading as a soldier.

Compelling as it is, this masquerade is not only about posing as a soldier, but also about assuming a double identity. Although the young sitter has all the attributes of a Polish-Lithuanian nobleman, he is in fact Dutch. A self is here presented in the guise of alterity. The household inventory of an Amsterdam-based weapons trader Dirck van der Waeyen lists this painting as 'a portrait of Otto van der Waeyen by Ferdinand Bol',[364] confirming the sitter as Dirck's son. The information presented visually in the painting affirms this attribution: the arms of the van der Waeyen family appear at the top right. But why dress a Dutch boy in Polish-Lithuanian costume? As Harry Berger Jr. has noted, early modern portraits can turn the represented subjects into 'the index of exemplary value, the transparent embodiment of "ideals of public virtue" presenting [themselves] for the observer's admiration, veneration, and edification.'[365] Dirck likely carefully chose the dress his son would wear in a portrait. The van der Waeyens had extensive contacts

[363] Wiesław Majewski, 'The Polish Art of War in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *A Republic of Nobles: Studies in Polish History to 1864*, ed. J. K Fedorowicz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 179–97.

[364] The inventory of Dirck van der Waeyen, Otto's father, of 14 July 1670 lists 'een conterfeytsel van Otto van der Waeyen door Ferdinand Bol'. Municipal Archives Amsterdam (GAA), not. N. Brouwer, NA 3928, fol. 139-150, 14 July 1670. In support of this identification, see exhib. cat. Rudolf E. O. Ekkart, *Nederlandse Portretten Uit de 17e Eeuw: Eigen Collectie* (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 1995), 54–56. See also exhib. cat., Rudi Ekkart and Jan Baptist Bedaux, *Pride and Joy: Children's Portraits in the Netherlands, 1500-1700*, Haarlem: Frans Halsmuseum (Amsterdam: Ludion, 2000), 237–239, no, 64.

[365] Harry Berger Jr., 'Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture', *Representations*, no. 46 (April 1994): 103–104.

with Danzig,[366] and this is the most likely reason why the young Otto appears in this portrait as a Pole. The painting provides a number of clues about how to read this sartorial masquerade.

These cues are provided in the background. There, two canons loom in the shade. Additionally, ramrods hang on the wall and bullets lie on the floor, suggesting that Otto is portrayed in an armoury. This assemblage of military equipment and fittings provides a commentary on the actual purpose of the sartorial masquerade in Bol's painting. Otto's costume manifests more than merely Dirck's business links with Poland-Lithuania; it explicitly connects the wealth of van der Waeyen family with the economically peripheral Poland-Lithuania. Selling technologically advanced firearms to Poles was only possible because the Commonwealth's foundries could not themselves meet local demand.[367] This ineffectiveness stemmed from the country's over-reliance on agriculture for economic development. The Dutch were only too aware of their competitive advantage, flooding the Polish-Lithuanian market with high-end commodities. Under such favourable circumstances, arms trade was an extremely profitable business.

For Dirck van der Waeyen, to represent his son in Polish-Lithuanian costume provided an opportunity to show both his success in trading with the Commonwealth, and his reliance upon this trade. In conveying this double-ended message, Bol's portrait of Otto van der Waeyen comes with a number of ambiguities. Seemingly, it depicts a boy who is a foreigner. The boy is, however, a young Dutchman who only masquerades as a Pole for the purposes of making a visual statement about the van der Waeyen family's place in the world. The anachronism of Polish-Lithuanian military gear contrasts with the Dutch state-of-the-art artillery depicted in the

[366] Albert Blankert, *Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680): Rembrandt's Pupil* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1982), cat. no. 13.

[367] Majewski, 'The Polish Art of War', 188; Frost, *After the Deluge*, 2.

background. The superior position of the Dutch within Baltic trade is evident, but Bol's painting simultaneously mediates the dependence of the van der Waeyens on the chains of demand and supply that linked Danzig with Amsterdam. Although the young Otto dons the costume of a Polish-Lithuanian gentleman soldier, and is armed with a war hammer and a quiver, he does not of course assume a foreign identity. Rather, the masquerade is a defensive mask that is put on to hide any potential similarities with Poles.[368] Perhaps paradoxically, while evoking an idea of an authentic Dutch identity behind the mask, the masquerade in Bol's portrait simultaneously disrupts the idea of a coherent self.[369] Polishness is employed to define Otto's identity as a negative reflection—the van der Waeyens could exploit their competitive advantage only owing to the Commonwealth's relative underdevelopment. At the same time, however, the family acknowledges the impact of this country on their high status within Amsterdam society. Arrogant self-confidence mixes with respect, marking the family's identity as porous and contingent. Otto's masquerade unsettles the coherence of mutually exclusive divisions.

Importantly, Bol's portrait of Otto van der Waeyen was merely one of many depictions of Dutch boys in Polish-Lithuanian costume. Other wealthy Dutch families commissioned and displayed similar paintings, suggesting that this was a widespread practice. For example, the record of the estate sale of the painter Abraham Vinck from 24 August 1621 lists 'a Polish boy *f* 24:10:-'.[370] Similarly, the inventory of Coert Cooper records '1 painting of a young Pole'.[371] In the inventory of Jacobus Bernardus de Bruyn, there is 'a portrait of a young man wearing a

[368] For the analysis of masquerade as a social practice, see Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 10 (1929): 303–13.

[369] On masquerade and identity, see Efrat Tseëlon, 'Introduction: Masquerade and Identities', in *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Marginality*, ed. Efrat Tseëlon (London: Routledge, 2001), 3.

[370] 'Een Poolsche jongen *f* 24:10:-' See Nicolaas de Roever, 'Drie Amsterdamsche Schilders', *Oud Holland* 3 (1885): 185.

[371] '1 schilderij van een jonge Pool'. Municipal Archives Amsterdam (GAA), DBK 356, fol. 50v–65v, 21 March – 2 April 1650.

Polish cap with a feather, in a black frame'.[372] More mature Dutch sitters also had themselves depicted in Polish dress. For instance, the 1680 inventory of Joan Snel lists portraits of a man and a woman 'dressed Polish style'.[373] The wording in the inventory entries above does not state whether these paintings were portraits or *tronies*. What these entries do suggest, however, is an ability to recognise Polish-Lithuanian costume. One archival record explicitly states that the Polish clothing represented in a portrait was modelled on real clothes that the sitter owned. This evidence appears in the last will of the Amsterdam couple Joan Cloppenburch and his wife Geertruijd van Swaenswijk, in which they bequeath to their son Johannes Cloppenburch 'his portrait or painting, together with his Polish clothes'.[374] This unequivocal wording confirms that these clothes were authentically Polish, or at least were considered to be so.

What the inventoried paintings looked like can be surmised from extant paintings of boys dressed in Polish-Lithuanian dress, which are plentiful. One of them is Karel Slabbaert's *Portrait of a Boy* (Fig. 3.12),[375] in which an anonymous sitter sports all of the familiar attributes of Polishness: an inner golden kaftan (*żupan*), an outer red coat with slit sleeves and decorative buttons (*kontusz*), feathered headgear, a war hammer. Alternatively, the sitter might carry a sabre, as in Caspar Netscher's *Boy in Polish Costume* (Fig. 3.13). Here, the boy wears long red boots and a sash belt. Together, these two paintings supply a range of props and garments that would easily be recognized as 'Polish costume.' It is noteworthy that so many Dutch portraits and *tronies* render 'Polish' juveniles using the same fixed repertoire of conventional visual

[372] 'Een jongelings contrefijtsel ophebbende een Poolsche muts met een pluym, in een swarte lijst'. GAA, DBK 365, fol. 159–162, 26 February 1659.

[373] '… op sijn Poolsch uytgehaelt'. GAA, not. M. Baars, NA 3758 A, act 687, pp. 228–259, 7 February 1680.

[374] '… mede noch desselfs pourtraict oft schilderije, mitsgaders oock sijn Poolse clederen'. GAA, not. J. de Vlieger, NA 3656, fol. 452, 27 January 1705.

[375] See Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde Der Rembrandt-Schüler*, vol. 1 (Landau/Pfalz: Edition PVA, 1983), 519.

tropes that we saw in Bol's *Portrait of Otto van der Waeyen*. This pervasiveness suggests that a larger claim about the relationship between the Netherlands and Poland-Lithuania was being formulated.

In the republican context of the United Provinces, where male citizens were responsible for the defence of their town or city,[376] it is not surprising for a wealthy merchant to have his son represented as a soldier. What is puzzling, however, is to have chosen the soldier from a country that in many ways was seen as the Dutch Republic's subordinate. One explanation is the quasi-military form of noble sociability in the Commonwealth, which was noted by most visitors and commentators. Not unlike the Dutch Republic,[377] Poland-Lithuania was engaged in a number of wars throughout the seventeenth century.[378] Poles themselves, and western European writers after them, depicted the Commonwealth as a bulwark of western Christendom, asserting that it stood between Europe and the incursion of Turks and Muscovites.[379]

One Dutch writer expressed great admiration for Polish-Lithuanian nobility during the Polish-Swedish war of 1655–1660, stressing that 'the Poles were very well mounted and experienced horsemen'.[380] The martial skill of the nobility is often noted. The Dutch-German cosmographer Andreas Cellarius makes this clear in his book on Poland-Lithuania: 'It is also said that the King can put into the field one hundred and fifty thousand horsemen, both lightly

[376] David Kunzle, *From Criminal to Courtier: The Soldier in Netherlandish Art 1550-1672* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 573–88.

[377] Svetlana Alpers, *The Vexations of Art: Velázquez and Others* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2005), 83–109.

[378] Augustyniak, *Historia Polski, 1572–1795*, 591–745.

[379] Wiktor Weintraub, 'Renaissance Poland and "Antemurale Christianitatis"', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4 (1979): 929.

[380] '… de Polen seer wel te paerden saten en bereden waren.' Anon., *Oorspronck Begin En Voortgank, Der Oorloghe Tusschen de Cosakken, Polen, Moscoviters En Sweeden 1650* (Amsterdam, 1657), 17.

and heavily armed: they receive no payment.'[381] He adds, '… so that in the Polish wars the nobility form the best and larger part of the cavalry.'[382] Abraham Booth, secretary to the Dutch legate to Poland-Lithuania and Sweden, shares this idealised notion of Polish-Lithuanian nobility as excellent soldiers: '... the militia normally found in Poland: The Hussars or Lancers, on which they rely the most, are generally made up of the principal nobles of the country; they are splendidly dressed and their horses finely caparisoned, ... as well as the sabre carried at the side they have a sabre stuck under the horse's saddle which is almost as long as a rapier.'[383]

Yet other writers were more ambivalent about their assessment of Polish-Lithuanian nobility. Guillame de Beauplan's *Description of the Ukraine* serves as an example of the coexistence of opposing attitudes to Poles. Originally published in French in 1651, but soon translated into Dutch, this travel narrative gives a conflicted picture. First comes admiration:

> [Poles] are very courageous, resolute and skilful at their Weapons, wherein they outdo all their Neighbours, as making it their common Exercise, for they are seldom or never without War against some of the powerful Princes of Europe, as the Turks, Tartars, Muscovites, Swedes, Germans; and sometimes two or three of them together.[384]

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[381] 'Oock wort'er gheseyt dat den Konick hondert en vijftigh duysent Ruyters, soo van lichte als sware wapeninge ten oorlogh in 't velt kan brengen: dese winnen geen soldy.' Andreas Cellarius, *Het Koninckrijck Poolen en toebehoorende landen* (Amsterdam: Gillis Jansz. Valckenie, 1660), 34. Earlier Latin version, Andreas Cellarius, *Regni Poloniæ, Magnique Ducatus Lituaniæ, omniumque regionum juri polonico subjectorum, novissima descriptio* (Amsterdam: Apud A. Janssonium, 1659).

[382] 'Alsoo dat in der Polen Oorloghen den Edeldom de meeste ende beste Ruytery maeckt.' Cellarius, *Het Koninckrijck Poolen*, 45.

[383] '... wat militie ghemeenlick in Poolen wert gevonden: De Hussaren ofte Lanciers op wiens forces zy haer meest vertrouwen, sijn int gemeen vande voorneemste Edellieden vant Lant, zijn seer prachtigh in Kleederen ende gewaet van hare Paerden, ... boven haer Sabel diese op de zijde draghen, hebben noch een Palache onder de Sadel van haer Paerden steekcen, 't welck by naer soo langh is, als een steeck-kade.' Abraham Booth, *Iournael, van de Legatie Gedaen in de Iaren 1627 En 1628* (Amsterdam, 1632), 12.

[384] Sieur de Beauplan, 'A Description of Ukraine, Containing Several Provinces of the Kingdom of Poland ... Written in French', in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. 1 (London, 1704), 606.

This positive assessment of Poles' bravery and martial skill is nonetheless followed by a mockery of their vestiary practices:

> These People, when they go to war, serve after a strange manner; and should we see such as them in our Armys, we should rather gaze at than fear them, tho they are loaded with all sorts of Offensive Arms.[385]

Here admiration mixes with contempt. Surrounded by enemies, Poles developed supreme martial skills, yet their proximity to these foreign forces also led them to indulge in exotic extravagance.

Secretary of the French legation to Poland-Lithuania in 1635-36, Charles Ogier, whose work in Latin was widely available in the Netherlands, is equally ambivalent about Polish-Lithuanian profligacy in equipping their army:

> The Polish nobility, all on beautiful stallions, in splendid and shining armour, with the skins of panthers, lions, and tigers slung over their shoulders; they carry long lances held by straps hanging from the saddle. At the end of the lance, underneath the blade, are silk ribbons, or pennants, which whirl in the wind and blind the enemies' eyes. This is all stunning, but it is hard not to laugh at the sight of the long wings attached to their backs, from which, as they believe, the enemy's horses get frighten and run away. Horse bridles are gold and silver, and from the horse's neck dangle silver necklaces and rings. At their side, Polish soldiers carry swords, and in the saddle: pistols, clubs, hammers, axes and sword-sabres. … Those who do not wear expensive skins, cover their arms with carpets, both for decoration and for covering fissures in the armour. Our people would find this great extravagance overbearing.[386]

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[385] Ibid., 607.

[386] Charles Ogier, *Ephemerides, Sive Iter Danicum, Suecicum, Polonicum* (Paris, 1656), 342–43. 'Sunt illi Nobiles Poloni omnes, equis praestantibus infident, armis lucidis ac splendidis operti sunt, ac Pardorum, Leonum, Tigridumque pellibus à tergo amicti, longas lanceas gerunt, quae loris ab ephippio pendentibus sustentantur, quarum in summitate infra cuspidem, vittae sive fasciae sericae revinctae vento impelluntur, hostiumque oculos fallunt. Praeclara illa sunt, at risum non teneas, cum illorum rergo longas alas aptatas conspexeris, quibus etiam

Evident in this passage is the rhetoric of decadence, which effectively encourages readers to define themselves in contrast. Yet the simultaneous emphasis on Poles' chivalric valour partially offsets this unequivocally negative identification, turning it into an impression that is more intermediate and unstable.

These two traits—bravery and exotic extravagance—effectively operate in Bol's *Portrait of Otto van der Waeyen*. The portrait simultaneously shows what is worthy of imitation (bravery), and indicates what is better to be avoided (recklessness and sartorial excess). In so doing, this image escapes the easy didactism of so many Dutch paintings in which a child's improper behaviour is already being corrected by authority figures in the image.[387] In its place, Bol's portrait offers a more ambiguous portrayal, where growing up is depicted as a liminal state. For Simon Schama, 'to be Dutch at all, at least in the seventeenth century, was to be imprisoned in a state of becoming: a sort of perpetual political adolescence'.[388] Bol's *Otto van der Waeyen* can be read in terms of such a process of becoming: the young Otto possesses the dual promise of both bravery and recklessness and it is not certain which trait will predominate into adulthood. Control is not inscribed in this portrayal like it is in the more conventional Dutch depictions of boyhood. It is mainly up to Dirck van der Waeyen to ensure that Otto chooses the right path, and that the family's fortunes accordingly continue to flourish.

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hostium equos terrere se putant, atque in fugam vertere. Equorum fraena argentea deaurataque sunt, atque a collo orbiculi ac lunulae argenteae dependent, lateri frameam, ephippio sclopetos, clauas, malleos, secures, enfesque appendunt. … Qui pretiosas pelles non habent, tapetes humeris suis implicant, hoc tam ad speciem, quam ad armorum iuncturas tegendas pertinet. Caeterum homines nostril, tam multa haec impedimenta omnino improbant.'

[387] See Mary Frances Durantini, *The Child in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 85–92.

[388] Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 495.

A dominant belief was that a child remembers and retains what is first taught—be it a virtue or vice.[389] Teaching proper behaviour would secure becoming a virtuous adult. It would be an uncertain investment, but an investment worth making nonetheless for the benefit of family's future. In Bol's portrait, trade connections with Poland-Lithuania are an important factor on which the future of family depends. Boyhood and periphery are thus conflated as necessary prerequisites for the van der Waeyens' prosperity. Their reliance on Otto's maturing into virtuous manhood is here an apt visual metaphor for interdependence between the economic core and the periphery. In a world where a centre could not function without the periphery, the van der Waeyens depended on the Dutch influence over Poland-Lithuania. Portrayed wearing the dress of this country, Otto effectively embodied that influence. As a child needs rearing and constant oversight, so did the periphery. As a son guaranteed a future for the early modern family, so did the periphery generate the wealth and power for the economic core, when properly managed. Bol represented this relationship in the guise of childhood; the Polish-Lithuanian periphery was likened to a child, and the child displayed some characteristics of the Polish-Lithuanian periphery.

Bol's portrait and other 'Polish' images of children thus present a nuanced relationship between centre and its periphery. The periphery may have been characterized as considered immature and thus volatile; but at the same time it was treated as an important young family member. Could there be a more emphatic way of communicating an affinity with another country than representing it as one's child? Yet likening the periphery to a child simultaneously brought connotations of inferiority. A child needs to grow up before it is taken seriously. In economic and emotional terms, it is an investment that needs to be taken a good care of before it

[389] Ekkart and Bedaux, *Pride and Joy*, 44.

pays off. The numerous images of boys in Polish-Lithuanian dress suggest that this investment brought good enough dividends to continue thinking about the peripheral Poland-Lithuania as a junior family member.

The Self, the Other and the Periphery

Poles kept a prominent place in Dutch self-perceptions even when the Baltic link became less important for the Republic, as it was being replaced by growing colonial trade. The Republic's expanding trade routes put the Dutch in contact with the peoples from the colonies and other distant places on an unprecedented scale. The Dutch now had to position themselves vis-à-vis the inhabitants of their maritime empire's furthest reaches: the peoples they considered much more curious than the Poles. Many portraits of wealthy Dutch families make this clear when they point explicitly to the compound and referential character of the sitters' elite identities. In many cases, the sense of self-professed identity is determined by explorations of manifold references and connections, effectively destabilising oppositional alterity as identity's source. Allusions to Poland-Lithuania played a part in these relational constructions of identity. In favouring an interplay of multiple masks and masquerading props to express their values, several elite Dutch families portrayed themselves as part of a wider interconnected world. It is to these instances of relational thinking about the self that we now turn.

Albert Cuyp's *Portrait of the Sam Family*, painted in the early 1650s (Fig. 3.14), depicts a wealthy merchant-class family posing together in a pastoral setting. Most family members wear the conventional Dutch clothing of the mid-1650s. This includes Jan Jacobssen Sam, the family's patriarch, who appears as the most prominent figure at the centre-left. He is clad in black coat and a tall brimmed hat, and with a black goatee to match the dress. Yet not all family members

wear the sombre black. Two male sitters particularly stand out: a turbaned boy in the foreground and an adult man at the left, also in turban. They both don exotic dress, which is so different from the other clothing in the portrait that it invites the viewer to ponder the reasons for this sartorial flamboyance.

A clue is provided by a little scene in the background (Fig. 3.15). There, amidst grazing cows and the reloading of cargo, a man wearing typical Polish-Lithuanian dress engages in a conversation with two Dutchmen. Wearing the typical *żupan* and plumed hat, with a sabre to his side, the man resembles the Pole from Rembrandt's drawing (Fig. 3.4), while the Dutchmen echo the men in black in the painting's foreground. Archival records help in decoding the meaning of the exchange between these figures.[390] Jan Jacobssen Sam was a successful wine merchant.[391] His business was based in Dordrecht, which held staple rights for wine. The Sam family acted as middlemen between wine producers in the Upper Rhine Valley and consumers in the Baltic, mostly Poles. Rhenish wine was shipped by barrel to Dordrecht and aged in the city's cellars. To mark the Sams' connections with the wine trade, grape vine foliage is included in the painting; it grows behind the figures, trying to advance to the foreground. Another visual cue that alludes to the family business is the cityscape on the horizon. This background town has been identified as Bacharach in the Upper Rhine Valley, important to the wine trade as a transfer point.[392] These allusions to the source of family wealth suggest that the conversation between the Pole and Dutchmen in the background is a scene of trade negotiation. A Pole is striking a deal with the

[390] W. Veerman, 'Cuyp, Een Dortse Kunstenaarsfamilie', in *Aelbert Cuyp En Zijn Familie: Schilders Te Dordrecht*, ed. J. M. de Groot, Exh. Cat. (Dordrecht: Dordrechts Museum, 1977), 19; John Michael Montias and John Loughman, *Public and Private Spaces : Works of Art in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Houses* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000), 165–67.

[391] John Loughman, 'New Light on Some Portraits by Aelbert Cuyp', *The Burlington Magazine* 150, no. 1266 (2008): 589; B. van Dooren, 'De Dortse Kwartieren van Hendrika Bisschop', *Gens Nostra* 47 (1992): 201–3.

[392] Loughman, 'New Light on Some Portraits by Aelbert Cuyp', 589.

Sams or their agents. The family can only pose together in this prosperous idyllic landscape because of the steady income pouring into their coffers from Poland-Lithuania.

The painting does not communicate this reliance in explicit terms. Rather than openly indicating the family's debt to the Polish-Lithuanian consumer—the visual strategy of Bol's *Portrait of Otto van der Waeyen*—the Sam family's portrait operates in terms of hints and metaphors. Scholars have suggested that the family member wearing fantastical dress and a turban in the background is Arent Huttenus who married Catharina Sam in June 1653; she stands next to him.[393] The colourful dress of the couple may denote their appearance as the Isaac and Rebecca of the Old Testament.[394] This portrait was probably commissioned to solemnise the event of their marriage. The document held by another male family member and pointed to by Huttenus, is likely the marriage contract. Huttentus's costume solicits the beholder's attention for yet another reason: it resembles the dress of the Polish-Lithuanian merchant in the background. Both men wear colourful tunics that contrast with the black attire of Dutch burghers. Trade relations with a country considered flamboyant is thus an excuse to show abundance. The Polishness of Huttentus, however, is merely a suggestion; the primary association would likely be with the biblical lore. Yet the substitution of Polish-Lithuanian dress for biblical or antique costume was not without a precedent. In fact, one contemporaneous inventory written in 1638 records a 'Polish *tronie* with a feather' only to cross this description out and replace it by the wording '*tronie* à l'antique', suggesting the anachronic implications of Polish-Lithuanian

[393] Ibid., 588. For marriage documents, see Stadsarchief Dordrecht (SAD) DTB 20, fol. 185, 8 June and 24 June 1653.

[394] For the popularity of this motif in the portraits of married couples, see E. de Jongh, *Portretten van Echt En Trouw : Huwelijk En Gezin in de Nederlandse Kunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw*, Exh. Cat. (Haarlem: Frans Halsmuseum, 1986), 319–20.

costume.[395] Given the context of this portrait, could the dress in which Huttenus appears slip into connotation of Polishness? Quite possibly; but the connection between the Pole in the background and the Dutch sitters in the foreground is multifaceted and requires consideration of several aspects.

As Cuyp's portrait reveals the Sams' trade links with Poland-Lithuania, it also visibly pushes this country to the periphery of the Sams' world. It is a periphery, however, that is not lost from sight. As with the Polish tradesman, so with Huttenus; outlandish costume marks the young groom as an outsider at the time of making the marriage vow; he will have to prove himself before fitting into the Sam family fully. Like the Pole in the background, he is both an insider and an outsider. Like the Pole, he is essential for the family's future and its prosperity. It is not necessarily the sartorial authenticity of Huttenus's costume that brings its associations with Polishness. It is rather the visual similarity of Polish-Lithuanian dress with that of the Islamic east, and in turn also of the Holy Land, that connects the figures of Huttenus and the Polish merchant. Once this connection is made, the liminal and ambiguous status of Poland-Lithuania applies also to Huttenus. The periphery, in this respect, supplies a ready-made scheme for thinking about affairs taking place at the very heart of the economic centre.

Adding to this play of associations is the turbaned boy in the foreground. He wears a tunic that resembles the Polish-Lithuanian *żupan*, but may also be read as *all'antica*, analogically to Huttenus's costume. The sword at his side, however, brings forth firmer associations. Not only does it intersect with the Polish-Lithuanian custom of carrying a weapon at all times, but also with the attire of the sword-carrying enterprising nobleman from the Commonwealth in the

[395] 'Poolse troni [crossed out and replaced by: Antyckse trony] met een pluim'. Municipal Archives Amsterdam (GAA), not. L. Lamberti, NA 569, pp. 355-363, dd. 7 May 1638, in the inventory of Cornelis Aertsz. van Beijeren. Partially published in Abraham Bredius and Nicolaas de Roever, 'Rembrandt, Nieuwe Bijdragen Tot Zijne Levensgeschiedenis', *Oud Holland* 5 (1887): 236–37.

background. Although the boy's costume may not be fixed as 'Polish', it could feasibly be read as such. By mirroring the figures of Dutch boy with Polish merchant, a visual comparison is made between the family's reliance on Poland-Lithuania for its wealth, and its reliance on the youngest generation for its future. To aid the beholder in this pairing, the boy keeps a squirrel on the leash. This is no doubt to draw a parallel between the training of domestic animals and the nurturing of children.[396] Like the periphery, the boy is still malleable, and therefore requires competent oversight to secure the survival of the Sams' family business.

In portraying the Sam family, the painting shifts between different sartorial registers: biblical, Dutch, Polish, and generically oriental. In a similar vein, the spatial setting of the scene is also uncertain: Dordrecht, Bacharach, Danzig, Holy Land, or Arcadia. This plurality of associations signals the Sams' prosperous involvement in an international network of suppliers and clients. Cuyp's painting reveals the multifaceted nature of the family's wealth, which relied on good relations with partners in the Upper Rhine and the Baltic. The Sams were the middlemen in this supply chain. Clearly aware of this mediatory role, they chose to represent their family identities and interests through the lens of their engagement with the periphery. This was a way of claiming centrality in wine trade, and effectively asserting awareness of the periphery's importance for their prosperity.

Polish-Lithuanian accents reverberate in other paintings by Cuyp. One of them is the group portrait of the van Beveren brothers painted in the early 1650s, known as *Huntsmen Halted* (Fig. 3.19). The portrait depicts members of another distinguished Dordrecht family. They are the three surviving sons of the affluent and noble Cornelis van Beveren (1591–1663):

[396] On the rearing of children and animals, see Jan Baptist Bedaux, 'Beelden van "Leersucht" En Tucht. Opvoedingsmetaforen in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 33 (1982): 49–74.

Willem (b. 1624), Jan (b. 1626), and Cornelis (b. ca. 1632).[397] Hunting rights were reserved for the nobility in Holland,[398] and Cuyp's equestrian portrait effectively confirms the high status of the sitters. In this image, we again see clothes that resembles Polish-Lithuanian dress. This is in fact hunting costume; by the 1650s specialised garments had been developed for riding.[399] While the mounted gentleman at the left wears French riding costume, the gentleman standing behind the white horse, and the man putting on riding boots both sport a riding attire which appears to be a variation of the Polish-Lithuanian gentleman's *kontusz*. This corollary can be reaffirmed by comparison with other portraits by Cuyp depicting members of the van Beveren family. Art historians have pointed out that many garments worn by this family in other portraits by Cuyp were also reminiscent of Polish-Lithuanian fashions.[400]

Like the Sam and other Dordrecht families, the van Beveren's prosperity depended on the staple trade to which their city had a legal right. They made their fortune selling Rhenish wine to Poles, and re-selling Polish wood in the Netherlands. The sitters' father, Cornelis van Beveren (1591–1663), Lord of Strevelshock, West-IJsselmonde, and De Lindt, was a wealthy and influential citizen who held numerous high public offices, including Burgomaster of Dordrecht, and Receiver General of South Holland.[401] In line with the van Beveren family motto, *per mare, per terram* ('by sea and by land'), he used both these routes to increase his wealth. As a local

[397] Stephen Reiss, *Aelbert Cuyp* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 9-10, no. 122.

[398] Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *1650: Hard-Won Unity*, trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 100.

[399] Phillis Cunnington and Alan Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Black, 1969), 99; Marieke de Winkel, *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt's Paintings* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 102.

[400] Elisabeth de Bièvre, *Dutch Art and Urban Cultures, 1200-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 89.

[401] M. A. Beelaerts van Blokland, 'Het Dordtsche Geslacht Van Beveren', *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 61, no. 9/12 (December 1943): 161.

Dordrecht politician, he could defend the city's staple trade, which guaranteed the wealth of his own family.

Cuyp's painting depicts members of a wealthy family whose wealth arose from foreign business operations. The van Beverens operated in a society that was familiar with other cultures, not just the Baltic, having a long history of international trade.[402] But while wealthy merchants such as the Sams and van Beverens thrived in this context, many others found foreignness threatening. Like elsewhere in Europe,[403] a number of Dutch moralists voiced doubts about the benefits of foreign trade. Local authors decried the Dutch dependence on exotic substances and vilified those who used them. Opposition between expensive luxuries, foreign in origin, and the wholesome necessities sourced locally translated into uneasy relations between the users and detractors of foreign goods. Luxuries were classified as expendables, mentioned only to be dismissed. For example, the physician Johan van Beverwijck (1594–1647) in his treatise on health *Schat der Gesontheyt* published in 1632, and later re-published in 1561 and 1672, criticises the Dutch for craving exotic foods:

> Every land has enough to satiate the hunger of its inhabitants, and to cure the sickness that befall them ... So that is a great transgression to despise one's own food and drink, and not to find it to one's own taste, unless it comes from far away, and costs a lot, to do the disservice not only of the bodily health, but often also to the ruin of the household.[404]

Van Beverwijck continues that it was luxury that brought about the decline of the Roman empire: 'The Romans, when they lived in great soberness and moderation, brought the whole

[402] Braudel, *Civilisation and Capitalism*, 3:175–276; Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II*, 36–71.

[403] Christine R. Johnson, *The German Discovery of the World: Renaissance Encounters with the Strange and Marvelous* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 123–65.

[404] English trans. in Julie Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 232. After Johan van Beverwyck, *Schat der Gesontheyt* (Amsterdam: Jan J. Schipper, 1672), 223.

world to their rule; then at the last through their great luxury and excess they were undone …'[405]

Reading treatises such as this one, one could make a hasty generalisation and argue that a sense of Dutch identity emerged against the alleged threat of foreign corruption, but this would deny a wider spectrum of Dutch experiences and voices. The elites of the Republic clearly enjoyed foreign luxuries and the identities they publicly professed were made up of components that had once been seen as exotic. Take, for example, the black page who holds the reins of the van Beveren's horses in Cuyp's *Huntsmen Halted*. His presence in the portrait suggests that the van Beverens' prominent place in society owes much to external relations of power and exploitation. Like many black servants in early modern Europe, the page's presence in the portrait follows from Dutch colonial expansion and participation in the African slave trade and American sugar plantations.[406] These peoples, like objects, were the physical mark of the Dutch empire. In the colonies, many of them were legally the property of their owners, and were treated accordingly.[407] In the Dutch Republic itself, slavery was formally illegal, but nonetheless many blacks worked in patrician households as domestic servants.

Cuyp's *Huntsmen Halted* suggests that these domestic servants not only reminded affluent Dutch families of their reliance on the outside world, but also of their own susceptibility to foreign influences. The van Beveren brothers have already embraced some aspects of a foreign culture. They wear hunting dress that bears resemblance with Polish-Lithuanian costume, which is a visible mark of hybridisation. The visual rhetoric of Cuyp's portrait treats this hybridisation as a matter of so little import that it ought not to become a focus of controversy or

[405] English trans. in Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade*, 232. After Beverwyck, *Schat der Gesontheyt*, 223.

[406] Jean Michel Massing, *From the 'Age of Discovery' to the Age of Abolition*, vol. 2, The Image of the Black in Western Art (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 229.

[407] Allison Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch World: The Evolution of Racial Imagery in a Modern Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 27.

comment. This nonchalant attitude to transculturation follows, of course, from the brothers' upper hand in controlling the exact level of foreign influence. They were, above all, members of the powerful elite for whom an increased mobility of objects and people brought many benefits. Moreover, the van Beveren brothers in the portrait take after the European periphery of the Republic, which was notably different from the American or African colonies. The periphery did not have to be controlled by military power, it opened itself up to Dutch influence voluntarily. It did not have to be made anew in the Dutch image; it was vaguely reminiscent of the United Provinces. It was 'almost different, but not quite'. Indeed, the van Beverens could wear their riding costume without being accused of diluting their identities.

The question of identity is of course a difficult one, especially as it refers to the people who lived centuries ago, and of whose lives we only have fragmentary sources. Scholars who study contemporary societies have moved away from the conceptualisation of identity as singular, stable and definitive towards thinking about identity as a durational process that is a work in progress and can never be fully resolved.[408] Paintings like *Huntsmen Halted* suggest that for our early modern ancestors, identity, too, was always in process and constituted within, not outside, representation.[409] For the van Beverens to pose in hunting dress that could read as 'Polish' implies a masquerade that both revealed and concealed reliance on foreign trading partners. The black page in Cuyp's portrait, by contrast, indicates a different power dynamic. He too wears a costume based on oriental designs; this includes a kaftan and a turban. While the Dutch sitters 'dress down' as Poles, the black page, likely a former West African or American slave, 'dresses up' in an exotic costume provided by the Dutch. For him to become *almost the*

[408] Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory Identification and the Visual Arts* (London: Routledge, 2012), 229–39.

[409] See Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 392.

same but not quite required that the van Beverens masquerade as *almost different but not quite*. In each case, clothing highlights alterity as much as it points to similarities. The huntsmen and the page dress in corresponding fashion, but the black skin of the boy effectively prevents him from being seen as Dutch, despite wearing a costume congruous in style to the van Beverens' attire. While the hunting dress may bring forth associations with Poland-Lithuania, the same dress simply signifies exoticism when worn by the page. The incommensurability of the exterior sign and the interior disposition thus highlights the fallacy of the notion of a coherent identity exemplified by costume.

The message of the van Beveren portrait is that although contact with the other might bring about changes to the self, this dependence of a self on the other was mitigated by the reassertion of differences. The visual rhetoric of the painting relies on this dualism to make a larger point about sartorial ambivalence. While the black servant might appear exotic at first sight, he is nonetheless tamed and domesticated by the van Beverens as the costume he wears was by no means considered foreign at that time. The black servant's dress is a livery rather than an authentic ethnic costume. Viewers would have likely recognised this conflation of various sartorial codes, and treated it as something familiar rather than exotic.

This smooth transition between foreignness and localness allows us to re-think the perceptions of cultural alterity that historians of early modern Europe discuss under the rubric of exoticism. Literally meaning something 'from the outside', the category 'exotic' is usually applied to signal the line that Europeans drew between themselves and peoples from other continents. This is a demarcation between *us* and *them*. Historians have pointed to examples of such notional separation from others. For example, Historian Benjamin Schmidt has recently explored how in the post-1648 Europe, Dutch printing presses—which dominated book

publishing at the time—presented the exotic world as an antithesis of Europe. Effectively, as Schmidt argues, both Europe and the allegedly fused world of exoticism were being created as mirror opposites.[410] The point about constructing exotic alterity is important here, since—as Peter Mason has lucidly demonstrated—'the exotic … is not something that exists prior to its discovery. It is the very act of discovery which *produces* the exotic as such, and it produces it in varying degrees of wildness and domestication.'[411]

Exoticism surely played a role in solidifying 'Europe' as a broader identification mechanism for the dispersed inhabitants of the continent (provided they were literate and relatively wealthy). But it must be clarified at this point that this binary model of self was by no means the only mechanism for reifying 'Europe' as a discourse of common heritage. The discourse on Europe was not built solely on the binary of sameness and difference, but rather on the specifically early modern constructions of history that arose from the writings of classical authorities such as Ptolemy, Tacitus, Pomponius Mela and others.[412] These accounts, written in antiquity, did not follow early modern confessional, economic and political divisions. Early modern cartographic representations of the continent followed on from this model, promoting an image of Europe as a landmass inhabited by many different peoples. Europe before post-Enlightenment orientalism was portrayed as a spectrum rather than a homogenous zone; there were similarities between the various peoples who inhabited the continent as much as there were differences between them. Both these differences and similarities were foregrounded in the descriptions of Europe and its people, which were published by the most prominent printing presses of the Netherlands, Germany, France and England. Poles in these descriptions were a

[410] Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, 14.

[411] Peter Mason, *Infelicities: Representations of the Exotic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1–2.

[412] Piechocki, 'Erroneous Mappings: Ptolemy and the Visualization of Europe's East'.

constant reminder that Europe is a diverse place. The perceptions of Scandinavians, Hungarians, the southern Slavs, the Irish and Greeks were, too, implying that early modern Europe was not a coherent entity, but rather a conglomerate of various peoples and customs. The construction of Europe based on difference from the exotic other was not yet achievable in the seventeenth century, though Schmidt is right to argue that the foundations for this process were likely already laid in the middle decades of the century.

We must not forget, however, that cultural domestication and appropriation were often intimately linked with exoticism throughout the early modern era. Objects that had once been seen as exotic were becoming part of the every-day sociability for many Dutchmen, especially the wealthy and the powerful.[413] The world of the Dutch elite was expanding not only because of the growing knowledge of the globe and capitalism's restless search for markets, but also because the world literally unfolded itself in the wealthy Dutch household. The Persian carpets soon became synonyms of elite homeliness, the American potatoes made their way into the staple diet of the wealthy, the Turkish tulips became the nation's favourite flower.[414] Similarly, the black pages and maids who served in the chic town houses of Amsterdam spent a lot of time with their employers, turning them into quotidian interactions rather than exotic encounters. These household staff were effectively 'almost the same, but not quite'. Exoticism could never be the dominant discourse among the affluent citizens who spent much of their lives surrounded by the goods and people who made their lives so homely and comfortable. The world was for these people a much smaller place than it was for most Dutchmen. Difference was never

[413] Gerritsen, 'Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands', 4–13.

[414] For an argument against the 'exotic' as a category of otherness, see Gerritsen, 'Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands'.

unbridgeable inasmuch as it could be tamed, and the self was expandable and continuously in flux. Flexibility was a must for early modern capitalists as it served their self-interest.

This acknowledgment of identity's malleability is visible in the 1652 *Portrait of Willem van den Kerckhoven and His Family* painted by Jan Johannes Mijtens (Fig. 3.20), another family portrait that represents two of its subjects in what could be perceived as Polish-Lithuanian dress. The family patriarch Willem van den Kerckhoven sits in the middle of the *mis en scène* wearing what appears to be Polish-Lithuanian *żupan* and silk sash. With this, however, he dons French-style hose and shoes. The boy who stands between Willem and his wife Rijnburgh Sebastiaendr de Jonge also wears a Polish-style *żupan*. Other male members of the family don costume that could be described as placeless, timeless, or pastoral. Given that Willem van den Kerckhoven was a jurist to the court of Holland in The Hague,[415] and had no connection with Poland-Lithuania, we must presume that the Polish costume here stands for no specific place, but rather denotes an atemporal bucolic mood. To this end, the oldest son at the right, Melchior, holds a shepherd's stick.

A black page leading a horse by its reins in the background invites the elite beholder to relate this pastoral scene to the context they knew very well: that of colonial trade and domestic service. Both the page and the horse are signifiers of the sitters' high social status. They remind the viewer that although van den Kerkhovens claim to inhabit a timeless Arcadia, they are in fact an elite family living at the world's economic core. The putti crowning Willem with laurel further strengthen this reading. They represent the spirits of his children who had died before the painting was painted. But since Arcadia is a topos of social harmony, the putti cannot be crowning a shepherd; this would empower him over others thus bringing inequality into the

[415] Rudi Ekkart and Quentin Buvelot, eds., *Dutch Portraits: The Age of Rembrandt and Frans Hals* (The Hague: Mauritshuis, 2007), 164, cat. 41.

idyllic Arcadia. Willem van den Kerkhoven is clearly a wealthy citizen who can only appear in Arcadia at the expense of the less fortunate peoples, like the black page in the background.

The premise of Mijtens's painting is built around a contradiction in that the family are simultaneously shepherds in Arcadia and citizens of the Dutch Republic. In navigating through the broad gamut of associations which this painting arouses, the beholder is left with questions. Are van den Kerkhovens really in Arcadia? If so, why do some of them wear what looks like Polish-Lithuanian costume? Were there servants (or even slaves) in Arcadia? As a consequence of this interpretative complexity, Mijtens's painting entangles multiple cultures with each other. The timeless Arcadia in the portrait is only a figure of utopianism, but one that collapses under the very real economic relations also registered in the painting. The result is the creation of crosscutting identities for the van den Kerckhoven family, with their multiple attachments and cultural references.[416] The van den Kerckhoven are wealthy citizens in a country interlinked with the entire world. If the scene takes place in Arcadia, it is a *Realpolitik* Arcadia built on the Dutch idea of economic order. The black boy, a token of the colonies, reminds the viewer of Dutch economic clout across the globe. The Polish dress worn by Willem and his son alludes to the 'mother trade', equally important for Dutch prosperity in the mid-seventeenth century. Above all, it was trade with this peripheral country that turned the Dutch Republic into Europe's entrepôt in the sixteenth century, and paved the way for the Dutch economic hegemony in the seventeenth.

Mijtens's *Portrait of Willem van den Kerckhoven and His Family* is symptomatic of how the Dutch elite understood their central position in Europe and the world: always in relation to others, and along with the anxiety of dependence on others. This anxiety was negotiated in

[416] For this concept, see Wolfgang Welsch, 'Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today', in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 198.

images such as this one. On the one hand, Mijtens's portrait shows an elite Dutch family as the beneficiaries of early modern global trade. On the other hand, however, the painting sublimates the labour of the people who made the elite Dutch lives so comfortable and cushioned. These lives were shaped by constant intermixing with others—here this dubious honour is performed by the black page. They were also dependent on cultural entanglement—here communicated by Polish costume. The wealthier citizens of the United Provinces could not hide their reliance on the expanding world. Even the Dutch Arcadia was not pure, but marked by outside influences.

Conclusion: Seeing the Self through the Lens of the Periphery

For a long time, Poles were seen as important contributors to Dutch prosperity. Perceptions of Polishness not only inspired the Dutch to think about their own country in relation to the Polish-Lithuanian periphery, but in so doing these perceptions also took part in redefining local self-identitifications. With the increased role of colonisation and the growing interest in the wider world, elite Dutch self-identitifications were being remade in the context of the Republic's growing global influence. The Dutch elites quickly naturalised the objects and peoples previously deemed exotic into their every-day lives. As a long-serving other, almost different but not quite, Poles were one of the peoples who provided the material props that members of Dutch higher strata used in their self-representations. Defying the simple dichotomy of self and other, these material forms made a statement of self-perception that deferred a sense of a clearly bounded identity. Because the precise mechanism of this deferral could not be stabilised nor controlled, there was never a moment when a Dutch identity was coherent and complete unto itself.

Representations and appropriations of Polishness in the Dutch Republic were merely one of the media through which wealthy Dutchmen communicated a growing dependence on the outside world for their own shifting identities. But given the special status and long history of Dutch-Polish relations, it is worth considering how the Dutch experiences and perceptions of Polishness impacted on the ways in which the Dutch portrayed themselves. Not only does such critical inquiry uncover conversations between Polish and Dutch material and visual cultures, but in so doing it also challenges the notion of the periphery as merely a passive recipient of cultural forms that radiated from the centre. The images of Polishness discussed in this chapter call for subtler, more varied and complex interpretations.

Chapter 4

Foreign as Native:
Baltic Amber in Florence

> Art and the region where it is produced are neither stable nor fully shaped. On the contrary, both are created in a dynamic process and in relation to other regions and subjects, to the local tradition and external influences.
>
> Piotr Piotrowski, 'On the Spatial Turn'.[417]

A painting in Francesco I de' Medici's *studiolo* in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence invites its viewers to ponder the origin of amber (Fig. 4.1). Painted by Santi di Tito in 1572, and known as *The Creation of Amber*, this mythologically themed *historia* centres on the fate of the Heliades. Literally, 'daughters of the Sun', the Heliades appear in a number of classical literary accounts as the characters associated with the emergence of this prized material (Fig. 4.2). Once nymphs, the Heliades were transformed into trees in an act of shapeshifting inflicted on them by the gods. The Heliades' flesh turned into wood and bark and their tears to amber. This new and luminous substance metonymically evoked the sisters' solar lineage. Ovid mentions three Heliades by name, each name containing the ideas of sunlight: Phoibe was 'bright', Lampetia 'shining', and Phaethousa 'radiant'.

Their metamorphosis links them to the tragic story of their brother Phaethon, also recounted by a number of classical authors, of which the most influential was Ovid in his

[417] Piotr Piotrowski, 'On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History', *Umění* 56 (2008): 380.

Metamorphoses. Part of a larger moralistic tale,[418] Phaethon took the horses of his father Helios for a ride without having the skill for the task—with dire consequences. Unable to control the sun-chariot, Phaethon let the solar steeds run too low, nearly setting the earth alight. To prevent the ultimate havoc, Jupiter struck the boy with a mighty thunderbolt. Phaethon's body plunged ablaze into the river Eridanus—the site that became his deathbed.[419] Learning of the tragedy, the Heliades hastened to lament their brother. Four months into their constant weeping, the transformation began. In Ovid's words:

> while the sisters wonder, bark
> enfolds their groins and, step by step, their bellies,
> their breasts, their shoulders, then their hands.[420]

Shocked by this sudden shapeshifting, the sisters called to their mother Clymene for help. But she could only watch as her daughters were transfigured into trees and listen as they uttered their final words, 'Farewell':

> At these last words, the bark closed up.
> And from these new-made boughs, the tears that drip
> are amber: it will harden in the sun.
> The stream's clear waters bear that amber off.[421]

Santi depicts the onset of the Heliades' metamorphosis (Fig. 4.1). The transformation of Helios's daughters into trees has only begun. Two sisters have just realised their plight: one on the left puzzles over the progressing bodily changes, the other in the background throws her arms up in despair. Another two sisters still weep for their brother, unaware of twigs springing from

[418] Aneta Georgievska-Shine, 'Horror and Pity: "Thoughts on the Sense of the Tragic in Rubens's Hero and Leander and The Fall of Phaeton', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 63 (2003): 225.

[419] Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 2.307–70.

[420] Ibid., 53.

[421] Ibid., 54.

their hair. Alongside the mythological figures, Santi also includes characters in early modern costume. Two athletic men—fishermen perhaps—gather amber nodules at the riverside, while a young woman in aristocratic garb holds a batch of amber in her skirt.[422] These sixteenth-century figures are mimicked by three putti, who also engage in the harvesting of amber drops. Despite sharing a single pictorial plane, though, the two groups inhabit very different temporal moments. A rhythm of posture suggests the interweaving of the figures and their actions, yet there is no explicit interplay between them.

These two figural ensembles organise the painting into two temporal planes that, although separate, echo one another: the mythological protagonists at the right; and an early modern crowd at the left, identifiable by their sixteenth-century costume. The historical and mythical domains are, however, conjoined by the putti, who link the left and right halves of the composition. A finely dressed boy who engages with the woman in the foreground looks like a sixteenth-century version of the putti, further bridging the temporal gap between the figures in the painting. Thus, while on the one hand the beholders partake in the mythological scene, on the other, they peek into the cultural milieu of the late Cinquecento. The connection between the classical deities and the early modern Italians in the painting is the geographic area where amber was allegedly harvested—the Eridanus. In Italian translations, the elusive Eridanus became the

[422] Amber was an expensive material in the early modern period. See Jacek Bielak, 'Mecenat Miasta Gdańska wobec bursztynnictwa: Przyczynek do semantyki wyrobów rzemiosła w podarunkach dyplomatycznych nowożytnego miasta', in *Bursztyn jako dobro turystyczne Basenu Morza Bałtyckiego*, ed. Janusz Hochleitner (Elbląg: Wydawnictwo PTTK, 2008), 52–60; Rachel King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold": Amber and Cross-Cultural Connections Between Italy and the Baltic in the Early Modern Period', in *Materiał Rzeźby: Między techniką a semantyką*, ed. Aleksandra Lipińska (Wrocław: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2009), 461.

Po, an interpretation based on classical sources.[423] What the beholder sees represented in Santi's painting, then, is the Po Valley.

The painting assumes a familiarity with Ovid's narrative. Aiding the viewer in attributing the theme, Santi depicts the figure of a muscular naked man reclining by the riverbank. This white-haired male is Eridanus, here acting as god of the river Po. By conflating distant temporalities within a single geographical place (depicted in a single pictorial space), Santi asserts the historical embeddedness of amber in the Po Valley. The point of entry into this painting and the link that associates the otherwise temporally disjointed figures is amber itself.

Santi's focus here is on the Ovidian story, the pursuance of which displaces the more widespread account of amber's origin—its provenance in the Baltic Sea, endorsed by most authorities on this substance. This region is in fact where most European amber was sourced in early modernity. Predominant throughout Europe, the Baltic account of amber's origin was supported by the authority of early modern naturalists—including Georg Agricola, Conrad Gesner and Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt—as well as by classical authors such as Pliny and Tacitus.[424] Adding to the evidence offered by naturalist discourse, most amber artefacts in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe were produced in two Baltic towns: Danzig and Königsberg.[425] Collectors such as Francesco I (r. 1574–1587) probably knew the geographic

[423] For example, 'Il Po, lavando al giovinetto il volto' in Ovid, *Le Transformationi*, trans. Lodovico Dolce (Venice, 1555), 42. For the identification of the Eridanus with the Po (Padus in Latin), see Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947), 3.15.117.

[424] Georg Agricola, *De la generatione de le cose, ... recato tutto hora dal latino in buona lingua volgare* (Venice, 1550), 235v–245v; Conrad Gesner, *De omni rerum fossilium genere, gemmis, lapidibus, metallis, et hujusmodi, libri aliquot, plerique nunc primum editi opera* (Zurich, 1565), 23–24; Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt, *Le parfaict ioaillier, ou histoire des pierreries* (Lyon, 1644), 410–29; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. D. E. Eichholz, vol. 10, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), XXXVII: 42-43; Tacitus, *La Germanie*, trans. Jacques Perret (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1983), XLV.

[425] King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"', 458; Rachel King, 'Whale's Sperm, Maiden's Tears and Lynx's Urine: Baltic Amber and the Fascination for It in Early Modern Italy', *Ikonotheka* 22 (2009): 167.

origin of the amber artefacts in their collections, not least because much worked amber arrived in Florence as gifts from Polish-Lithuanian and Brandenburg-Prussian courts.[426] Despite this evidence, however, the Medici were complicit in what we might call the Italianisation of amber. As Santi's *Creation of Amber* implies, Tuscany's ruling family were inclined to give credence to the narratives of amber's origin that most European naturalists deemed fiction.[427]

We now understand Baltic amber to be fossilised conifer resin that had hardened about forty million years ago.[428] Most early modern naturalists at least recognised amber's provenance as Baltic. At the same time, however, they classed it as a type of bitumen, an oleaginous substance sourced from the ground. In identifying amber as hardened resin, Ovid's account of its origin on the banks of the Po, even if fictional, was closer to our modern understanding of this material. My argument here is that in interacting with amber and appraising its physical properties, many classically inclined Italians were in thrall to the classical myths of its generation, rather than to the naturalist tracts. Rachel King has addressed this paradox, aptly demonstrating that the status of Baltic amber in early modern Italy was ambiguous, as it elicited notions of both foreign places and local history.[429] The mechanism for this divergence between naturalist theories of amber and the classical stories of its generation, however, has not yet

[426] Janina Grabowska, 'The Diplomatic Career of Gdańsk Amber', *Poland*, no. 8 (1971): 31–32; Kerstin Hinrichs, 'Bernstein, Das "Preußische Gold" in Kunst- und Naturalienkammern und Museen Des 16. – 20. Jahrhunderts' (PhD Thesis, Humboldt-Universität, 2007), 266; Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti, 'Due altari in ambra al Museo Degli Argenti', *Bolletino d'Arte* 51, no. 1/2 (1966): 164. See also Rachel King, 'Whose Amber? Changing Notions of Amber's Geographical Origin', *Ostblick*, no. 2 (2014): 14n60.

[427] Most early modern writers on amber refer to Ovid's story only to dismiss it as a fable. See, for example, Agricola, *De la generatione de le cose*, 238r; Boodt, *Le parfaict ioaillier*, 416.

[428] David A. Grimaldi, *Amber: Window to the Past* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 52.

[429] King's publications on amber's ambiguous status in Italy must be acknowledged here for the sheer scale of their ambition and achievement. Examining natural history treatises, travel narratives, inventories and other archival documents, the author provides numerous examples of amber's perceptions as an Italian material. See, for example, Rachel King, 'The Beads with Which We Pray Are Made From It: Devotional Ambers in Early Modern Italy', in *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Christine Göttler and Wietse de Boer (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 153–75; King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"'; King, 'Whale's Sperm'; King, 'Whose Amber?'

received analytical attention commensurate with the curiosity that amber stirred in the early modern period.

If Santi's *Creation of Amber* supplied cues to understanding amber, it was by linking its metamorphic creation (from resin to gem) to Ovid's account, in which, according to the classicist Leonard Barkan, the nature of a thing can be read from its materiality.[430] Barkan is interested in the metaphor of metamorphosis as a means of defining or, better still, confronting the thing's identity; the Heliades' tears become amber, reaffirming the sisters' solar lineage and marking their role in the Ovidian tale as Phaethon's eternal mourners. Metamorphosis in Ovid is thus an expression of identity that enables the reader to discover it in a material. This chapter builds on Barkan's insights, but focuses instead on metamorphosis as a physical imperative of materiality, a process in which the physical properties of amber are scrutinised and experienced. It also explores the idea of metamorphosis as a plot device that focalises and frames amber. Amber's materiality was a catalyst for the Ovid-inspired account only inasmuch as it was framed by the intersections between the myth, its various incarnations in texts and images, the physical properties of amber and the precepts of early modern natural history. Amber's ability to self-reflexively refer to its generation from tree resin, and consequently to its origin on the banks of the river Po, was itself a belief constructed from cultural representations. Amber's materiality could only call up its own making either as hardened resin or bitumen in a context conducive to such belief. The enquiry into amber's materiality took part in deliberating about its supposed native character, and this chapter explores this discursive indigenisation.

My main interest is in amber as a discourse on an ambivalent spatial placing and erasure. While Florentine patrons and beholders downplayed the Baltic origins of amber, they were fully

[430] Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 88.

aware of Danzig's and Königsberg's manufacture of amber artefacts. Incoherent attitudes such as theirs complicate our understanding of the cultural dynamics between an artistic centre and its purported periphery. Traditionally, the European peripheries—and this includes the Baltic region—have been understood by art historians as sites of passive reception for the art that emerged from the artistic centres of Europe.[431] This understanding is currently being challenged by art historians, who point to the ethnocentrism and historiographic constructedness of this older narrative.[432] This chapter contributes to the revision of the periphery's place in art history by exploring how the prized commodity sourced from the Baltic Sea was re-framed as a statement of local history and pride in Medici Florence.

The process of misunderstanding and re-imagining the origins of amber matters because it allows the inclusion of peripheral visual culture in the story of art in one of Europe's major artistic centres, while simultaneously debunking the notion of origin linked to a specific place. As this chapter will demonstrate, the origin of things was in the eye of the beholder. By shifting the idea of origin from the realm of ontology to the world of appearances and perceptions, this chapter will foreground the study of trans-cultural entanglement as an antidote to the traditionally introspective account of Florentine art.[433] Instead of confining amber artefacts to a specific location, I will consider a more geographically dispersed distribution of early modern

[431] For a critical review of this tendency, see Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, 163–64.

[432] Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'The Challenge of Central Europe to the Historiography of Art', *Maske und Koturn* 48 (2002): 19–27; Tomasz Grusiecki, 'Going Global? An Attempt to Challenge the Peripheral Position of Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Painting in the Historiography of Art', *The Polish Review* 57, no. 4 (December 2012): 3–26.

[433] Recently, art historians have begun to treat Florentine art and visual culture with a more trans-cultural agenda in mind. See, for example, Lia Markey, 'Stradano's Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2012): 385–442; Mark Rosen, *The Mapping of Power in Renaissance Italy: Painted Cartographic Cycles in Social and Intellectual Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

ideas about amber, as well as the reasons for making and collecting works carved in this material.

This focus on the migration of materials and things resonates with the idea of 'horizontal art histories', as postulated by the historian of eastern European art Piotr Piotrowski (see the epigraph). For him, no artwork is made in isolation; it is created in relation to other artistic regions.[434] By paying attention to this dynamic process, where art is never stable or fully shaped, this chapter will focus on the mutual interdependence between artistic regions conventionally described through the binary logic of centre and peripheries. Addressing the question of artistic convergence and divergence between the Baltic region and Tuscany will move us beyond the traditional dyads of influence/reception, self/other and native/foreign, proposing instead an open-ended and horizontal account of cultural entanglement.

Double Belonging

In most of Europe, the Baltic provenance of amber was widely taken for granted, and Prussia was recognized as the source of the material. Indeed, most European amber began its journey across Europe at the Sambian Peninsula, which was part of the Duchy of Prussia (Ducal Prussia), fief of the Polish Crown until 1657. Königsberg, the duchy's capital, was the main site of amber artisanship in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Danzig (the biggest and wealthiest town of Royal Prussia and the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) overtook it as the main production centre in the mid-seventeenth century.[435]

[434] Piotrowski, 'On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History'.

[435] Janina Grabowska, *Polski bursztyn* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1982), 14–24.

The presses of Poland-Lithuania and the Duchy of Prussia published numerous accounts that stressed the Baltic origin of this material.[436] The most comprehensive Prussian texts on amber were by the Königsberg physicians Severin Göbel and Andreas Aurifaber.[437] These naturalists were the first to write volumes entirely devoted to amber, making discussion of its physical make-up and material properties much more exhaustive. Moreover, after inductive experiments, they pronounced amber to be a bituminous substance, thus claiming for it a resemblance to other substances such as tar, camphor and petroleum. This was in marked contradiction to Pliny and Tacitus, who had both flagged amber as derivative of tree resin.

Yet despite contradicting the identification of amber in those classical accounts, Göbel and Aurifaber embraced and even emulated Pliny's and Tacitus's stories of the gathering of amber on Baltic seashores. In Book Thirty-seven of the *Historia naturalis*—on gemstones—Pliny asserts that this material is a product of 'islands in the northern ocean' (the Baltic Sea). Pliny recounts Emperor Nero (r. AD 54–68), who dispatched a Roman officer to find the source of amber. The officer 'brought back so plentiful a supply that the nets used for keeping the beasts away from the parapet of the amphitheatre were knotted with pieces of amber'.[438] Tacitus, too, was suspicious of the Italo-centric account of the generation of amber in Ovid and others.[439] In *De Germania* (A.D. 98), he writes that beyond the land of the Goths there is the land of the Aestii people, who gather amber washed up by the sea.

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[436] For a general overview of German-language literature on amber before 1850, see Gisela Reineking von Bock, *Bernstein: Das Gold der Ostsee* (Munich: Callwey, 1981), 170–71. For Polish sources, see Grabowska, *Polski bursztyn*, 5–8.

[437] See, Andreas Aurifaber, *Succini historia*, Königsberg 1551 (second edition Königsberg 1572); Severin Göbel, *De succino libri duo*, Frankfurt 1558 (second edition Zurich 1565; German translation as *Historj ... des Börnsteins*, Königsberg 1566).

[438] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 1957, 10:37.11.45.

[439] 'Sed et mare scrutantur, ac soli omnium sucinum, quod ipsi glesum vocant, inter vada atque in ipso litore legunt.' Tacitus, *Germania* 45. Tacitus, *La Germanie*, 99.

Poles and Lithuanians were, like the Prussians, keen to address amber in their writings. Acknowledging its importance for his country, Polish-Lithuanian historian Szymon Starowolski discussed amber as one of the most important exports of the land—this remark occurs in a section on 'wealth' in his history of the Polish Kingdom, first published in 1632.[440] The author, perhaps informed by Tacitus, reports that, following high tide, amber is thrown onto the shores, where it is gathered for profit by 'naked' waders.[441] Amber is soft initially, but it darkens and hardens, becoming suitable for carving with a chisel. This reference to amber-gatherers makes it clear that, like the Prussian naturalists, Starowolski also traced much of his knowledge of this material to the classical narratives.

Other Polish-Lithuanian authors, too, evoked classical sources, particularly the poet Martial, who penned several epigrams about small animals imprisoned in amber.[442] For example, sixteenth-century Polish historian Marcin Kromer writes: 'In amber nuggets I saw ants, flies, mosquitos and other insects imprisoned there not by human art but by the workings of nature'.[443] This might be derived from Martial, who described a number of similar creatures congealed in amber, probably as ekphrasis of actual objects. The celebrated Polish naturalist Jan Jonston (who was of Scottish descent) was clearly inspired by Martial when considering creatures trapped in amber in his mineralogical compendium *Notitia regni mineralis* (Breslau, 1661).[444] Most evocative of Martial, however, was the Prussian poet Daniel Hermann, whose poem *De rana et lacerta succino prussiaco insitis* ('On the Frog and the Lizard ingrained in Prussian amber'),

[440] Szymon Starowolski, *Polska albo opisanie Królestwa Polskiego*, trans. Antoni Piskadło (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976), 137.

[441] Ibid., 106.

[442] Martial, *Epigrams* 4.32, and 4.59 in Martial, *Select Epigrams*, trans. Lindsay Watson and Patricia Watson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[443] Kromer, *Polska*, 35.

[444] Jan Jonston, *Notitia regni mineralis* (Breslau, 1661), 28–29.

published in Cracow in 1583, was entirely dedicated to animal inclusions, as the title suggests.[445] This poem is a panegyric to the Prussian material. The frontispiece depicts the eponymous frog and lizard trapped in amber (Fig. 4.3), giving the reader the gist of the poem and its inspiration from Martial. Unlike Martial, however, for whom amber was hardened tree resin, Hermann argues that small animals got trapped in liquid asphalt, which he calls naphtha, formed in the sea and in the depths of the earth.

As King has noted,[446] it is difficult to assess the dissemination of the Prussian and Polish-Lithuanian texts in Italy. Yet, implying potential impact, the Bolognese naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi mentions in his *Musaeum Metallicum* the author of the 'Tractatus de Succino' named 'Severinus' [Göbel] as an authority on amber.[447] Aldrovandi's treatment of Göbel is instrumental, however, because for the Prussian naturalist all amber is of Baltic extraction, whereas Aldrovandi distinguishes between Baltic and other ambers from across the world, including Italy, Spain and China.[448] Even without reading the Prussian and Polish-Lithuanian texts, however, Italian writers were in a position to acknowledge amber's Baltic provenance, as this information was available in several classical sources. Tellingly, Pliny had reviewed many classical myths concerning amber, only to refute them and espouse the material's Baltic origin.[449] The first printed edition of Pliny's *Historia naturalis* in Latin was published in Venice in 1469 by Johannes de Spira. The Italian translation followed soon after.[450] Since Pliny's book

[445] Daniel Hermann, *De rana et lacerta succino prussiaco insitis* (Cracow, 1583).

[446] King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"', 468.

[447] Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Musaeum metallicum* (Bologna, 1648), 413.

[448] Ibid., 409–12.

[449] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 1957, 10:37.42.

[450] See Charles G. Nauert, 'Humanists, Scientists, and Pliny: Changing Approaches to a Classical Author', *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (1979): 72–85.

on gemstones was one of the three most read in the volume,[451] we might expect many collectors—including Francesco I de' Medici—to have been familiar with it. Tacitus's Germania, which similarly advocated the Baltic origin of amber, was another text widely available in Italy at the time.[452]

Papal nuncios to Poland, too, emphasised that both Danzig and Königsberg were sources of amber. For example, in his description of Poland of 1565, Fulvio Ruggieri repeats Starowolski's claim that locals were diving into the sea in search of amber. The nuncio emphasises that amber belonged to the ruler, and whoever took it from the shore would be executed on the gallows.[453] He describes Poland as a country rich in amber, even though it was only the Baltic coast that supplied this precious commodity.[454] Another papal legate to Poland, Francesco Giovanni Commendoni, discussed the collection of amber from the Baltic Sea.[455] It seems, however, that his observations repeat the conventional wisdom of Pliny and Tacitus. The Venetian envoy to Poland, Hieronimo Lippomano, too, remarked on amber. He relates that in exchange for partial autonomy, Danzig ceded to King Casimir IV (r. 1440–1492) rule over the sea and the right to collect amber from the shore. The author deduces that the profit from this privilege must have been substantial, since subsequent monarchs reaffirmed this right for

[451] Sarah Blake McHam, *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance: The Legacy of the Natural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 4.

[452] See L. Krapf, 'The Literary Rediscovery of Tacitus's Germania', *Res Publica Litterarum* 5 (1980): 137–43.

[453] In Gintel, *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce*, 1971, 1:128.

[454] Ibid., 1:133.

[455] These remarks were collected by his secretary Antonio Maria Gratiani. For Gratiani's diary, see Ibid., 1:150–51.

themselves.[456] The mention of amber in the accounts of many visitors to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth implies that the country was renowned for it.[457]

The Medici were associated with the royal house of Vasa through family connections, especially from 1609 to 1631. Maria Maddalena of Austria (1589–1631), wife of Cosimo II, was the sister of Constance of Austria, Queen of Poland and Grand Duchess of Lithuania (1605–1631), who was the consort of Sigismund III (r. 1587–1632). Because of the Medici alliance with the Vasas, historian of the Medici collections Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti has suggested that many Medici ambers came from the Polish-Lithuanian court.[458] An example of such gift-giving is a little box carved in yellow amber encrusted with ivory plaques in bas-relief ('una cassettina d'ambra gialla con teste d'avorio di basso rilievo'), which belonged to the Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine (1565–1637)—wife of Ferdinando I de' Medici. The inventory asserts that it was given to her by a Pole ('havuto da un Polacco'), thus confirming Medici exposure to Baltic amber.[459]

That many of these objects originated as gifts from the Vasa and Hohenzollern princes is not surprising.[460] Both the Hohenzollerns (rulers of Ducal Prussia) and the Vasas (overlords of

[456] Hieronimo Lippomano, relation on Poland, 1575. In Ibid., 1:168.

[457] The English traveller Fynes Moryson, to give one example, was adamant that Poland-Lithuania 'yeelds great quantity of ty of s a Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary*, vol. 4 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1908), 69–70. Another English writer Samuel Lewkenor in his book devoted to European university towns underlines the vicinity of Königsberg to the source of amber in Sambia. Samuel Lewkenor, *A Discovrse of Forraine Cities Wherein...vniversities* (London, 1600), 54.

[458] Piacenti, 'Due altari in ambra al Museo degli Argenti', 164.

[459] Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Guardaroba Medicea 152, p. 51. In Ibid., 163.

[460] The role of amber in Hohenzollern diplomatic gift-giving has been the subject of several monographic studies, including Susanne Netzer, 'Bernsteingeschenke in der preussischen Diplomatie des 17. Jahrhunderts', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 35 (1993): 227–246; Jeanette Falcke, *Studien zum diplomatischen Geschenkwesen am brandenburghisch-preußischen Hof im 17. un 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2004). The famous amber chandelier in the collection of Maria Maddalena of Austria was probably a gift from Johann Sigismund Hohenzollern, elector of Brandenburg: 'una lumiera grande a tre palchi, con otto viticci per palco d'ambra gialla, con aovati e tondi pieni di figurine e storiettine d'ambra bianca, e un'aquila sopra che la par che la rega attacata nel mezzo a detta Tribuna, numero 1'. In Paola Barocchi and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, eds., *Il Cardinale Carlo*

Ducal Prussia until 1657 and sovereigns in Royal Prussia) used amber extensively as diplomatic gifts, linking this prized material to their territories.[461] Both ruling families claimed ownership of all amber found within their borders.[462] Sigismund III reputedly carved amber himself.[463] Many of these gifts were inscribed with his coat of arms.[464] However, no object that can be attributed with certainty to Sigismund III has survived. One carved amber artefact traditionally ascribed to his hand is a bowl in the Munich Residenz. This attribution owes much to the Polish White Eagle with the Vasa sheaf on its breast that adorns the lower side of the bowl's lid (Fig. 4.4). Moreover, the object's presence in the Schatzkammer suggests that it was given in dowry to Princess Anna Catherine Constance Vasa by her brother King Ladislaus IV (r. 1632–1648). The Vasa princess was married to Philip William Wittelsbach-Neuburg in 1642, and her dowry was transferred to Munich after Philip William's descendants—a junior Wittelsbach branch—ascended to the throne of Bavaria in 1777.[465]

When comparing Santi's *Creation of Amber* (Fig. 4.1) with the bowl at Munich (Fig. 4.4), we encounter two diametrically different cultural appropriations of amber. The first

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Maria Maddalena, Don Lorenzo, Ferdinando II, Vittoria della Rovere, 1621-1666, vol. 2, Collezionismo mediceo e storia artistica 2 (Florence: S.P.E.S., 2005), 558–688, f. 25v. For the history of this artefact, see King, 'Whose Amber?', 14n60.

[461] For instance, Sigismund III sent to Anne of Denmark, Queen of James I of England, his own portrait with the young Prince Ladislaus and a selection of ambers. See Magdalena Piwocka, 'Elżbieta Stuart: "Nieznana Dama" z Galerii w Nieświeżu"', *Folia Historiae Artium* 24 (1988): 158n11. For the original description of these gifts, see William Bruce, *Diary*, Archiwum Państwowe, Gdańsk, Bibl. Arch. Sygn. 300 R/Bb 32, p. 45, 52-53. In 1596, papal legate Enrico Caetano received in gift from Sigismund a crucifix, a tray for ampules, a crucifix-shaped pax, and a tabernacle for the Holy Sacrament 'made in Danzig'. See Elżbieta Mierzwińska, 'Bursztynnictwo', in *Aurea Porta Rzeczypospolitej: Sztuka Gdańska od połowy XV do końca XVII wieku* (Gdańsk: Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku, 1997), 147.

[462] King, 'Whose Amber?', 5.

[463] Lechicki, *Mecenat*, 179. See also Mierzwińska, 'Bursztynnictwo', 146.

[464] Grabowska, *Polski Bursztyn*, 18–19.

[465] Mieczysław Gębarowicz, 'Dzieła złotnictwa polskiego pochodzenia w skarbcu Zamku Królewskiego w Monachium', in *Studia do dziejów Wawelu*, ed. Jerzy Szablowski, vol. 4 (Cracow: Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, Zarząd Muzeów i Ochrony Zabytków, 1978), 310–11.

positions it as a material of particular importance to Francesco I de' Medici; the second as a patrimony of the Polish-Lithuanian monarch Sigismund III. The conflict of attitudes evident in these distinct artefacts marks this material as semantically multivalent, with two contradictory perceptions vying for acceptance.

As we have seen from the range of evidence available to the Florentines, the issue is not lack of knowledge about amber's Baltic derivation. What is at stake is the belief firstly that amber had a historical presence in Italy, and secondly—as in the case of Aldrovandi—that a variety of this material existed that was native to the region. This perception seems paradoxical. How can a native material come from elsewhere? The conundrum is a productive one, however, as it foregrounds the double belonging of amber in both Florentine and Polish-Lithuanian discourses on amber's nativeness. Attentiveness to this perplexing attitude to amber in Florence will reveal a frame of reference whereby the materiality of the substance was conducive to the stories of its origin favoured by the Medici court. This discursive framing began at its most basic level: answering the question of what amber actually is.

What is Amber?

To frame something as native means to mark its particular connection to homeland.[466] Of the many classical authors who had long provided support for the native origin of amber in Italy,[467] Ovid was perhaps the most influential, given his status as a canonical writer. First published in

[466] Alix Cooper, *Inventing the Indigenous: Local Knowledge and Natural History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3–5.

[467] The story is told with different variations by many classical authors. For a good overview, see Hesiod, *Theogony* 350 ff; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 5.23.3; Virgil, *Aeneid* 10.260-66, and Ecl. 6.62; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 152A, 154; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.748-2.380; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.4.1; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 25; Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 1.11; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Fall of Troy* 5.625–29.

Latin in 1471 and in Italian in 1497,[468] the poem reappeared in many editions and various formats, many of them illustrated, becoming one of the most accessible texts of the early modern period. A pocket version of Ovid could easily be taken away on travel, to work and play.[469] Those with limited time or seeking to refresh their knowledge of the stories in the volume could turn to the many emblem books based on the *Metamorphoses*.[470] Being familiar with Ovid's poem was a necessity of noble and patrician living, and virtually all persons of means would have been expected to know the main stories of this influential poem. They were read and re-read, while illustrations and independent images inspired by the text were pondered and memorised, in turn affecting perceptions of Ovid's stories themselves.[471] The myth of the Heliades was one of the most frequently depicted stories. Sometimes, it was given a solo treatment, but more typically it was presented as a backdrop to the fall of Phaethon, as, for example, in the Italian translation of the *Metamorphoses* by Lodovico Dolce (1553, Fig. 4.5). Here the Heliades turn into trees, while Phaethon is seen plunging into the Po.

As in the *Metamorphoses*, so in life, amber functioned as a metonym for the place where it was allegedly created. For the classically educated Italians who wanted Ovid to be right, the belief in amber's special connection with Italy was vindicated through the most effective of

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[468] Edward J. Olszewski, 'Bring on the Clones: Pollaiuolo's Battle of Ten Nude Men', *Artibus et Historiae* 30, no. 60 (2009): 33n7. The geographic derivation of amber at the Po was unconditionally supported by virtually all Italian editors of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, including Lodovico Dolce, Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara, Niccolò degli Agostini, and Gabriele Simeoni.

[469] For example, the pocket version of Andrea dall'Anguillara's translation, published in Venice in 1624. I have consulted a copy in the Newberry Library, Chicago, Case PA6525.M2 A53 1624. See also the following pocket editions in the Newberry Library: Venice 1502, Vault Greenlee 5100.O96 1502; Leiden 1588, Case Y 672.O9458; Burgos 1609, Case PA6526.M2 P47 1609.

[470] See M. D. Henkel, 'Illustrierte Ausgaben von Ovids Metamorphosen im XV., XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert', *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1926/1927, 58–144. See also the 1676 Paris edition in the Newberry Library, Wing folio ZP 639 .C849.

[471] See Paul Barolsky, *Ovid and the Metamorphoses of Modern Art from Botticelli to Picasso* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Christopher Allen, 'Ovid and Art', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 336–67.

means: the unearthing of this material locally. King has compiled a comprehensive selection of sources that document the uncovering of amber from Italian soil; each such finding was diligently reported.[472] For example, the collector Cassiano del Pozzo (1588–1657) deemed it noteworthy enough to inform the English physician George Ent (1604–1689) about digging the material up, to which Ent replied that he 'had rejoiced at the find of amber in Italy'.[473] Ent 'rejoiced' supposedly because he had not expected specimens to turn up so far away from the Baltic Sea. The amber pieces unearthed in Italy, however, were unlikely to have been geological deposits, but more probably archaeological specimens sourced centuries before from the Baltic Sea.[474] Amber was occasionally spotted at the seashore of Sicily.[475] But it was only in the late seventeenth century that Sicilian amber was harvested and crafted on a large scale.[476] Until then, to be clear, Baltic amber was probably the only variety used for the manufacture of artefacts collected in Italy.[477]

Ovid's identification of amber as hardened tree resin, which was at the heart of the belief that the material originated in the Padan Plain (the Po delta), met with strong criticism from many naturalists. Despite the authority of Aristotle, Pliny and Tacitus, who, like Ovid, believed

[472] Rachel King, 'Finding the Divine Falernian: Amber in Early Modern Italy', *V&A Online Journal*, no. 5 (Autumn 2013), http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/research-journal/issue-no.-5-2013/finding-the-divine-falernian-amber-in-early-modern-italy/; King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"', 466.

[473] George Ent to Cassiano del Pozzo, 5 November 1639, MS H 268, f. 62, Bibliothèque Médecine, University of Montpellier, translated in Alan Cook, 'A Roman Correspondence: Georg Ent and Cassiano Dal Pozzo, 1637-55', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 59, no. 1 (2005): 17.

[474] Only small quantities of naturally occurring amber have been found in mainland Italy (outside of Sicily). For amber's global distribution, see Grimaldi, *Amber*, 21–68.

[475] For example, Paolo Boccone reports the occurrence of amber on the Sicilian beach in the area between Agrigento, Leocato and Terranova: '… qualche pezzo di Succino. Io sono testimonio di veduta, per haverlo ritorvato nella spiaggia di Mare fra la Città d'Agrigento, Leocata, e Terranova, ch'è dirimpetto all'Isola di Malta.' Boccone, *Museo di fisica*, 35.

[476] See King, 'Finding the Divine Falernian: Amber in Early Modern Italy'.

[477] The chemical properties of the Roman amber artefacts support this thesis. Grimaldi, *Amber*, 153.

amber to be a resinous substance,[478] naturalists, including the Saxon Georg Agricola (1494–1555), rejected this interpretation.[479] Agricola asserted that although 'many Greeks' believed that amber was generated on the Po as a hardened resin of poplar, these people were mainly poets and so their conviction could easily be rejected.[480] Agricola believed that amber was 'an oily juice of the earth',[481] a type of asphalt (bitumen): an umbrella term spanning sticky, highly viscous liquid and solid substances such as naphtha, petroleum, camphor and jet.[482] Agricola's identification of amber as a bitumen derived from a classification system based on similitude. In drawing analogies between what he called the 'viscous juices of the earth', the Saxon naturalist understood natural materials as relating to one another through broadly defined correspondences rather than through the systematic connections of modern science.[483] Michel Foucault has written about the early modern hermeneutics of nature as a web of similitudes, defining the way in which things were linked together and discussed before the era of modern classification as 'nothing other than their resemblance.'[484] It was through the physical properties of things that

[478] For Pliny, amber was 'the gum of pine'. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 1957, 10:XXXVII, 43. See also Tacitus, *La Germanie*, XLV; Aristotle, 'Meteorology', in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), IV: 10 (p. 623).

[479] 'ben che non di sugo di albero, come essi pensorano.' Agricola, *De la generatione de le cose*, 235v.

[480] 'Molti Greci han detto, che egli si generi in Italia; e i poeti principalmente : Alcuni de' quali hanno detto, che presso al Po.' Ibid., 238r. 'la lagrima de l'albero, che chiamano popolo' Ibid., 228v.

[481] 'un sugo grasso della terra' Agricola, *De la generatione de le cose*, 237r.

[482] Ibid., 227r.

[483] Today we know that although both bitumen and amber share arboreal origin, the first derives from decaying wood, whereas the latter is fossilised resin. See Marjorie Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985), 9.

[484] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 2002), 33. Literature on early modern natural history is vast and growing. See, for example, Sachiko Kusukawa, *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Paula Findlen, 'Natural History', in *The Cambridge History of Science*, ed. Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 448–49.

such resemblance was established, and amber's association with bitumen was based on its physical attributes, including its oleaginous, shiny appearance and flammability.

Agricola, whose work was translated into Italian,[485] saw the source of amber (correctly) to be in Prussia, particularly on the shores of the Sambian Peninsula.[486] The identification of amber as bitumen found on the Baltic shore was shared, as we have seen, by all major writers on amber, and was therefore considered true by most European naturalists.[487] Aspects of this bituminous theory, however, required careful argument. Particularly perplexing were the pieces of amber that contained small creatures congealed in the material (Fig. 4.2 and 4.3).[488] How should one explain the presence of once-living bodies trapped in a nodule? How did they get there? Agricola reasoned that these live creatures 'crawl into or fall into the liquid bitumen when it flows out of the earth, or swim into it when it flows down into the sea, and once having been included in this manner they are changed into stone along with the amber'.[489] Naturalist Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt (1550–1632) was similarly inclined to believe that these beings were engulfed in a fountain of oil that shot from the ground, later congealing to form a gem.[490]

Yet the bituminous theory was hard to comprehend for those without specialist knowledge. The botanist Pietro Andrea Mattioli (1501–1578), possibly because he worked with

[485] Nicoletta Morello, 'Agricola and the Birth of Mineralogical Sciences in Italy in the Sixteenth Century', in *The Origins of Geology in Italy*, ed. Gian Battista Vai and W. Glen E. Caldwell (Boulder, CO: Geological Society of America, 2006), 27.

[486] Agricola, *De la generatione de le cose*, 240r.

[487] King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"', 461, 467–68.

[488] Rachel King, 'Collecting Nature within Nature: Animal Inclusions in Amber in Early Modern Collections', in *Collecting Nature*, ed. Andrea Gáldy and Sylvia Heudecker (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 8–10.

[489] Agricola, *De la generatione de le cose*, 242r-v. Translation after Georg Agricola, *De natura fossilium = (Textbook of Mineralogy)*, trans. Mark Chance Bandy and Jean A Bandy (New York: Geological Society of America, 1955), 76.

[490] 'il a avoit peut-estre une fontaine d'huile, d'où l'huile ruisselant a pû facilement engloutir semblables animalcules.' Boodt, *Le parfaict ioaillier*, 411.

plants, found the tree resin explanation more persuasive. His *Della materia medicinale* (Venice, 1544) is a translation of and critical commentary on *De materia medica* (c. 50–70 AD) by the ancient Greek pharmacologist Dioscorides.[491] It nonetheless contains much original material, including Mattioli's observations on amber. For Dioscorides, amber was a derivative of poplar resin, and Mattioli reviewed a number of sources in order to gauge the validity of this theory.

Given his attention to small animals engulfed in amber, we might assume that Mattioli began his enquiry with a classical topos in mind. His leads may well have been Martial's epigrams, which offered an apt exposition of how Dioscorides' resinous theory would work in practice. One of these poems—about a bee trapped in amber—is explicit in its reference to the myth of the Heliades:

> In the bright tear Phaëton's sister shed
> A bee is seen, as in its nectar dead.
> Its many toils have earned a guerdon high,
> In such a tomb a bee might wish to die.[492]

Employing the trope of the animal trapped in amber rooted in Martial's epigrams, Mattioli attributed amber's existence to the physical transformation of 'tree gum' (*gōma d'albero*) into indurated fossil. For a creature to be trapped in amber, the author thought, it must have been caught in a drop of resin, not a fountain of bituminous liquor.[493] For Mattioli, small animals captured in amber supplied indexical evidence of this material's resinous origin, one that worked

[491] Annibale Mottana, 'Italian Gemology during the Renaissance: A Step toward Modern Mineralogy', in *The Origins of Geology in Italy*, ed. Gian Battista Vai and W. Glen E. Caldwell (Boulder, CO: Geological Society of America, 2006), 9.

[492] Martial, *Epigrams* IV.32, in Martial, *Select Epigrams*.

[493] 'Che sia liquore abbondantemente coli dagli albere tenace, & uiscoso dimostrano cose, che ui si veggono congelate dentro, come sono fora miche, zanzare, vespe, mosche, lucertole, & festuchi. Conciosia che pero che intrigandosi questi animaletti, & altri mescugli nella viscosita del liquore, avanti che s'induisca, ui rimangono poscia nelseccarsi in pregione.' Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *Della materia medicinale* (Venice, 1563), 111.

inductively. By identifying the mechanics of an animal inclusion, Mattioli felt that he had found evidence to counter the naturalists for whom amber was a bituminous substance.

But Mattioli still needed to establish exactly which tree this material came from. Here, Martial was of no help since, like Ovid, he does not name the tree species from which amber was derived. The original Latin phrase Martial uses for amber is 'Phaethontide condita gutta' (Heliade's tear). As the Heliades were associated with the Po in the Italian translations of Ovid, Mattioli's discussion of amber takes place in the section on black poplar (*popolo nero*), a tree similarly linked to this river.[494] Mattioli was clearly aware of Dioscorides's view, which—at least in its Latin translation—not only associated amber with this tree, but also situated poplar on the banks of the Po: 'the tears of poplars flow into the Po [Latin, Padus], harden, and result in amber'.[495] Dioscorides is here clearly inspired by Ovid's myth.

Yet, having considered this account, Mattioli eventually disregarded Dioscorides' suggestion that amber was of poplar origin. He instead concluded that the material was a derivative of pine resin. This deduction was based on amber's scent: Mattioli noted that the material smelled like pine ('il manifesto odore del pino'), and therefore must have originated from this tree.[496] Thus, even though he discounted Dioscorides's Ovidian interpretation of amber's generation from poplar, Mattioli nonetheless professed an Ovidian sense of materiality. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, even after the process of transformation, the qualities of the original

[494] For example, John Evelyn notes the presence of 'diverse stately' poplars in the vicinity of Ferrara, although adds that 'for the amber of their precious tears … could hear of no such matter'. John Evelyn, *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions* (London, 1664), 37.

[495] 'Lachrymam populoru commemorant, quae in Padu amnem defluat, durari, ac coire in Sucinam.' This quote comes from an edition contemporaneous with Mattioli's, Dioscorides, *Pedanii Dioscoridis Anazarbei, De medicinali materia libri sex*, ed. Jean Ruel (Lyon, 1552), 90.

[496] Mattioli, *Della materia medicinale*, 110–11.

material are retained, essentially comprising an index of the former self.[497] The tears of the daughters of the Sun that turned into trees metamorphosed into luminous nodules of hardened resin, mirroring the Heliades' solar lineage. Mattioli, too, believed that amber as a nodule conveyed its past as 'tree gum'. While engaging with Dioscorides, Mattioli arrived at an understanding of this material that paid attention to amber's physical attributes. Pliny and Aristotle had already proposed a coniferous origin, and Mattioli was possibly familiar with these accounts. Crucially, however, it was the material properties of amber that convinced Mattioli of the fallacy of the bituminous theory. In preferring his own judgment, Mattioli demonstrates that the authority of early modern naturalists was not absolute and could be questioned.

Cultural Conditioning

Amber's physical qualities, as we have seen, could trigger different interpretations of its origin and physical make-up—it could be perceived as a substance of either resinous or bituminous provenance. It was through the process of contextual framing that the material could be understood one way or another. If at the Medici court amber could be seen as reflecting its resinous make-up, it owed this self-reflexive quality to a larger constellation of beliefs, preferences and contingencies. Santi's *Creation of Amber* was one such framing device that both mirrored cultural perceptions and helped maintain them.

Santi's *Creation of Amber* should be considered within the broader context of Francesco I's *studiolo,* where material transformation manifested a world in which nature is mutable and susceptible to physical variation. Collaborating with the erudite Vincenzo Borghini and the

[497] Kathleen Anne Perry, *Another Reality: Metamorphosis and the Imagination in the Poetry of Ovid, Petrarch, and Ronsard* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 18; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 169.

room's chief designer Giorgio Vasari, Santi ensured that his painting was in concordance with the other *historiae* in the *studiolo* (Fig. 4.6). These images corresponded not only to each other but also to the physical materials and rare objects stored behind the oval panels in the lower register, effectively arranging a sequence of cross-references and ordering cues, possibly in line with the rules of artificial memory theorised by the philosopher Giulio Camillo.[498] This iconographical programme matters in the context of the physical artefacts in the room, since it might suggest the actual location of these materials in the cupboards directly underneath their visual representation. By overlapping and juxtaposing images with objects in the cupboards, the *studiolo* set up an interplay of associations between nature and art that took materiality and transformation as a basis for thinking about the pliability and vitality of matter.

Under the organising principle of the Four Elements, paintings and artefacts in the *studiolo*—including objects made in amber—were valued for their conduciveness to creative transformation. The *Creation of Amber* thus shares an interplay with other painted *historiae* in the room. Santi's painting is displayed on the south wall dedicated to water.[499] Immediately to the left is Giovanni Battista Naldini's *Gathering Ambergris*, which presents this material (*ambra grigia*) as closely related to amber (*ambra gialla*). Ambergris, a digestive secretion of the sperm whale, shared both liquid derivation and etymology with amber, manifesting a similitude based on common association with water—not only were both materials harvested from the shore, but as buoyant substances they were also carried by water easily.[500] Other paintings in the *studiolo* also represent natural histories of materials, including coral, pearls and diamonds, while another

[498] Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 270–81; Scott Jay Schaefer, 'The Studiolo of Francesco I De' Medici in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence' (PhD Thesis, Bryn Mawr College, 1976), 112.

[499] Valentina Conticelli, *'Guardaroba di cose rare et preziose': Lo studiolo di Francesco I de' Medici, arte, storia e significati* (Lugano: Agorà Publishing, 2007), 199–269.

[500] King, 'Whale's Sperm', 170; King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"', 462.

group of *historiae* depicts the process of making bronze, gunpowder, jewels, glass and wool. Part of a larger decorative scheme to comment on the intersections between nature and human artifice,[501] Santi's representation of amber provided a semantic reference beyond the painted surface. The image did not serve merely as referent of the Ovidian story; engagement with the assembled objects could test the validity of that story. Placing an amber object against a source of light, one could link the material's luminosity and radiance to the Ovidian narrative, which connects this material to the Sun. The image must have prompted beholders to think of a myth that unfolded not only in their memory but also in contact with the material that brought the myth to life.

Amber was almost certainly one of the physical materials assembled in the *studiolo*, given the large amount of it in the Medici collection.[502] While the whereabouts of amber artefacts in the room is unknown, it seems most likely that they were kept in a cupboard underneath Santi's *Creation of Amber*.[503] One object that was particularly conducive to pondering the nature of amber was 'an amber pebble with a lizard frozen inside, trussed with a silk ribbon', listed in the 1589 inventory of the Uffizi Tribuna as stored on the twelfth of the

[501] Schaefer, 'The Studiolo of Francesco I', 202–212.

[502] The first documented instances of carved ambers in the Medici collection are from the 1587 inventory of the Casino di San Marco, which lists the following objects: 'una artiglieria di ambra gialla', 'uno vasettino piccolo di ambra gialla stretto', and 'una corona di ambra gialla con bottoni grossi da cavalieri con fiocco'. Inventario della Guardaroba della Casa e del Palazzo del Casino, a Custodia di Pier Elmi comminciato oggi questo 8 di marzo 1587, ASF, Guardaroba Medicea 136, cc. 153 v.–61, in Paola Barocchi and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, eds., *Da Cosimo I a Cosimo II, 1540-1621*, vol. 1, Collezionismo mediceo e storia artistica 1 (Florence: S.P.E.S., 2002), 336, 342, 343. This inventory was completed in the first year of Ferdinando I's rule, but the historian of the Medici collections Kristen Aschengreen Piacenti has suggested that the influx of amber objects to Florence dates back to the time of marriage of Francesco I to the Habsburg princess Johanna of Austria. See Kristen Aschengreen Piacenti, 'Ambre e avori' in Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti, 'Ambre e avori', in *Ambre, avori, lacche, cere, medaglie e monete*, ed. Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti (Milan: Fabbri, 1981), 28.

[503] Although there is no extant inventory for the *studiolo*, we can infer that amber was kept in the room's cabinets by subsequent evidence from the Tribuna, where the collection was transferred after Francesco himself had disassembled it for the need of a larger space. Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, ed., *La Tribuna di Ferdinando I de' Medici: Inventari 1589-1631* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1997), 15, 23, 24, 38–9, 60.

twenty shelves assembled in the room (*alla dodicesima mensola*).[504] This artefact might once have been kept in the *studiolo* before it was dismantled between 1586 and 1600.[505] English traveller Fynes Moryson, who visited the Tribuna in 1594, described it as 'a piece of Amber falling upon a Lizard, and retaining the lively forme thereof'.[506]

Moryson's phrase, 'falling upon' the unfortunate reptile, suggests that the Englishman, who in his description was possibly influenced by Florentine views, thought of the congealed lizard as though it had been immersed in resin that cascaded down from above. It was thus a drop of 'tree juice' that hardened on contact with the air, imprisoning the lizard in a gem-like form; the animal could not have been trapped in a fountain of 'earth juice' (bitumen), which would have engulfed the animal from below. The linguistic construct Moryson used to describe this artefact implies both Ovid's and Martial's influence, and perhaps also the recognition of Santi's *Creation of Amber* on display in the same collection. Indeed, Moryson visited 'the great Dukes study, called il studiol' del gran Duca [probably the Tribuna rather than the *studiolo*], in which '[he] did see most faire pictures'.[507] One of these paintings may have been Santi's Ovidian *historia*. Moryson must have also seen other objects made of amber—he specifically mentions 'a cup of Amber' and 'a clock of Amber'.[508] Making connections between stories, images and objects, the English visitor was thus looking at amber through and across different media. The

[504] '[Alla dodicesima mensola] Un ciottolo d'ambra gialla congelatovi drento una lucertola attaccata con un cordoncino di seta, n. 1.' The 1589 *Inventario di tutte le figure, quadri, et altre cose della tribuna* transcribed in Ibid., 15.

[505] The studiolo was completed in 1573, but was dismantled by 1600 and its paintings moved across the Medici collection. Today's state is a 1910 reconstruction. See Jack Spalding, 'Santi Di Tito and the Studiolo of Francesco I', *Antichità viva* 20, no. 5 (1981): 18.

[506] Fynes Moryson, *Itinerary*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: Robert McLehose, 1907), 322.

[507] Ibid.

[508] Ibid.

meaning of amber thereby oscillated between the agencies of the material, the Ovidian myth, the naturalist discourse, the space of display, the beholder and the object itself.

Santi's *Creation of Amber* was an element in a larger intertextual landscape where amber's physicality was perceived as an index of its resinous nature. But it must be clear by now that amber's indexicality was as much a cultural construct as it was embedded in material qualities. Apart from being a physical substance, amber was also a discourse, a totality of the acquired tastes and perceptions that enabled one to make the material signs speak and to unravel their meaning. Such material hermeneutics operated in a world of tangible amber artefacts. Yet these objects were firmly anchored in the world of beholders whose sensory perception was filtered through culturally framed patterns.

For semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce, 'an index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object'.[509] In other words, there must be a tangible connection between the object and the sign. But without the investigative apparatus of modern science, amber's indexicality was merely a signifier that needed to be framed by the discourses both internal and external to materiality. The lizard could serve as a sign denoting the resinous nature of amber only when firmly rooted in the Ovidian lore, Martial's epigrams, Aristotle's remarks on amber, and other classical sources. As an index, the lizard depended heavily on a framing mechanism that reified the causal relationship between amber and the undemonstrable act of tree resin falling on the animal. This relationship was coded as forensically sound. The presence of a lizard in the amber nodule, however, supported the resinous theory only because cultural representation in the form of texts, images and memories imbued amber's materiality with a particular sense of meaning.

[509] Charles Sanders Peirce, 'Nomenclature and Divisions of Triadic Relations, as Far as They Are Determined', in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 291.

Amber's indexicality was not framed around visual evidence alone. Its perceived origin also manifested itself as scent. As with animal inclusions, so with smell; amber triggered different perceptions of its physical make-up for different beholders. If you believed amber was a bituminous substance, you would have reportedly experienced a sensation that accorded with your belief. Agricola—who identified amber as a type of bitumen—compared its aroma with the heady odour of camphor, one of its sister species according to the bituminous theory.[510] In this case, amber's smell was an index of its bituminous make-up. On the other hand, if the beholder thought amber was a resinous material, a perception to match this understanding would have taken effect. For Pliny, amber undoubtedly derived from pine resin, a statement that finds confirmation in amber's olfactory properties as experienced and described by the Roman polyhistor:

> Even our forefathers believed [amber] to be a 'sucus', or exudation, from a tree, and so named it 'sucinum'. That the tree to which it belongs is a species of pine is shown by the fact that it smells like a pine when it is rubbed, and burns like a pine torch, with the same strongly scented smoke, when it is kindled.[511]

Many early modern Italians were likewise adamant that amber emitted the scent of pine, and here King's findings prove useful again.[512] Pietro Andrea Mattioli reported that the material 'manifests the scent of pine, which is released by rubbing it with fingers'.[513] The smell of amber was indeed one of the reasons why Mattioli argued that it derived from pine resin. Veronese antiquarian Lodovico Moscardo was of the same opinion. For him, too, amber, in contact with

[510] Agricola, *De natura fossilium* 63.

[511] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. D. E. Eichholz, vol. 10, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 37.11.43.

[512] King, 'The Beads with Which We Pray', 164–71.

[513] 'Corrobora, che sia il succino gomma d'albero simile al pino, il manifesto odore del pino, che ne lascia, stropicciandolo con le dita'. Mattioli, *Della materia medicinale*, 111.

human hands, releases the aroma of pine.[514] All these men treated the olfactory properties of amber as an index of its origin. This experience was as culturally coded as it was circular in logic. For the index was both a signifier and a symptom.

Those Florentines who followed Ovid and Martial would have been unconvinced that amber had affinities with tar and pitch—viscous materials of altogether different, pungent and heady, olfactory qualities. The functionality of a range of artefacts carved in amber suggests rather that these objects were enjoyed for their more fragrant scent.[515] As King has noted, many Italians would have been familiar with amber's aroma, given that Italy was an important export market for amber rosaries made in Danzig and Königsberg.[516] The Medici archives list a number of them, many of which survive (Fig. 4.7). The 1589 inventory of the Tribuna alone registers 'an amber rosary (*corona*) with thirty-nine [amber] paternosters, large and small'.[517] As the beads of the rosary required caressing while reciting prayers, it was an experience conducive to olfactory interaction. Stroking amber with warm fingers rubbed its scent into the skin, offering proof of the material's origin via its odour. Given the popularity of Ovid at the Medici court, a sentiment evident in Francesco I's studiolo, we might infer that the grand duke himself, as well as his courtiers and guests, would have taken the resinous theory seriously. Accordingly, they would have been preconditioned to detect the smell of tree resin on their fingers. The example of many

[514] 'Il che chiaramente conosce il odore dall'odore del Pino, che rende, mentre si stropiccia l'ambra'. Lodovico Moscardo, *Note overo memorie del museo di Lodovico Moscardo* (Verona, 1672), 132.

[515] By the mid sixteenth century, raw amber was used increasingly as incense in Italy. Both raw and bead amber were powdered and mixed with oils in order to prepare a number of scented ointments used as perfume for skin, gloves and caps. Amber was also used in potpourris and candles to enhance their fragrance. King, 'The Beads with Which We Pray', 169.

[516] King, 'Whose Amber?', 173; King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold"', 459; King, 'The Beads with Which We Pray', 159.

[517] 'A dì detto una corona di ambra giala con numero 39 paternostri fra grandi et picoli', Biblioteca della Sopritendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze, Ms 71, nota 473, in Bertelà, *La Tribuna di Ferdinando I de' Medici: Inventari 1589-1631*, 60n473.

naturalists who read this scent as bitumen implies that this olfactory perception was constructed—different people perceived amber's smell differently. Framed by texts, images and the entire iconographical programmes, the Ovidian subject matter represented in the *studiolo* thus predetermined the sensory experience of the beholder, further perpetuating the myth. To acknowledge amber's indexical correlation with the Heliades' tears through tree resin meant paying attention to amber's material qualities as framed by the Ovidian notion of metamorphosis. The idea of metamorphosis both reflected and helped bring about the transformation of Ovid's stories and Martial's epigrams into a dynamic locus for blurring the lines between the actual materials, sensory perception and cultural representation.

Amber as a Metonym of Place

As we have seen, in Santi's *Creation of Amber* (Fig. 4.1) the coupling of the Ovidian story with amber's physical make-up gave rise to the perceptions of this material in the *studiolo*. Santi foregrounds amber's physical properties by emphasising the metamorphic constitution of its substance. As a product of the metamorphosis that transformed the Heliades' tears into a material that shines when exposed to sunlight, amber was marked by the potential to self-reflexively account for its own origin while epitomising the solar lineage of the Sun's daughters.

Amber's translucent brilliance symbolically linked the Heliades with the Sun. Yet its metonymic function extended beyond the realm of materiality, entering the fields of geography and politics. By linking the origin of amber with the Po, Santi's *Creation of Amber* aligned this material with the interests of the Medici realm. According to the ancient Roman historian Livy,

the Po Valley was an Etruscan region before the era of Roman supremacy.[518] For the Medici, who often equated early modern Tuscany with ancient Etruria and drew on Etruscan history in dynastic lineage,[519] this was a useful way to legitimate their rule. Members of the Accademia Fiorentina diligently claimed the whole of Etruria for the Medici political agenda.[520] One reason for this discursive appropriation was the relatively recentness of the Medici elevation to the ranks of ruling princes. Their status was especially humbling when compared to that of the ancient House of Este, then the custodians of the Po delta. Francesco's father Cosimo I (r. 1537–1574) persistently worked to improve the Medici position in an order of precedence over the Estense, and Francesco continued his father's efforts.[521] To depict the origin of amber in the epicentre of the Medici power base was an attempt to make a connection between the history of a material reported by ancient writers and the history of early modern Tuscany.

Linking amber with the Po goes even further, as Santi places the material within a specific personal context for Francesco. He does this via the unassuming figure of a veiled woman in a red bodice in the painting's left margin (Fig. 4.8). The woman's significance for the *historia* had remained largely disregarded until art historian Corinne Mandel convincingly argued that the figure represents Francesco's sister, Lucrezia de' Medici, who had died in 1561

[518] Livy, *History of Rome*, trans. Rev. Canon Roberts (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1912), 5:33.

[519] Andrea M. Gáldy, *Cosimo I De' Medici as Collector: Antiquities and Archaelogy in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 112–32.

[520] Giovanni Cipriani, *Il Mito Etrusco Nel Rinascimento Fiorentino* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1980); Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, 'In Nota alla politica culturale di Cosimo I: l'Accademia Fiorentina', *Quaderni Storici* 23 (1973): 527–574.

[521] Robert Williams, 'The Sala Grande in the Palazzo Vecchio and the Precedence Controversy between Florence and Ferrara', in *Vasari's Florence: Artists and Literati at the Medicean Court*, ed. Philip Jacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 163–81.

at the age of sixteen, possibly from tuberculosis.[522] Importantly from the perspective of her appearance in the Po Valley, Lucrezia was married to Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio. As if to confirm her legal status, she wears a purple nuptial gown. To further clarify the significance of Lucrezia's marriage with Alfonso, Santi has painted a tower in the background that may be the Castello Estense in Ferrara.[523] Ovid provides a tie with Lucrezia's marriage to Alfonso, the reason why she left for Ferrara, by recalling the ancient Roman custom of brides wearing amber jewellery: 'The stream's clear waters bear that amber off / And it will adorn your wives in Rome.'[524] This is the line in the *Metamorphoses* that concludes the transformation of the Heliades' tears into amber.

In Santi's *Creation of Amber*, Lucrezia appears finely dressed and assisted by two upper-class male companions. She is holding a conversation that, given the painting's subject, could well be about amber. One of the men points to the wrapped bundle of amber carried by another expensively dressed young woman—in the close vicinity of the riverbank. Lucrezia herself wears a necklace, which is perhaps made of amber, while the hair of the highborn woman in the foreground is coiffed with a band of beads that also resembles the material created from the tears of the Heliades. The fact that both women wear such intricate pieces of jewellery—while amber is only being created by the will of the gods in the painting's right register—confirms the dual temporality of this image. Though metamorphosis is located in the past, it contributes to natural

[522] Corinne Mandel, 'Santi Di Tito's Creation of Amber in Francesco I's Scrittoio: A Swan Song for Lucrezia De' Medici', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 3 (2000): 728; Caroline Murphy, *Murder of a Medici Princess* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87.

[523] Mandel, 'Santi Di Tito's Creation of Amber', 742.

[524] 'The stream's clear waters bear that amber off / And it will adorn your wives in Rome.' Quoted after Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 55.

and political order in the present.[525] Acceptance of this logic marks the durability of amber at the Po, fitting squarely into the purpose of marking this material as Padan, and thus connected to Lucrezia.

By the time of the completion of the *studiolo*, Lucrezia had been dead for eleven years, but this makes her inclusion in the *Creation of Amber* even more appropriate. As a material purportedly forged as a result of the transfiguration of the Heliades into trees—in the aftermath of Phaethon's demise—amber might easily be associated with death. Pairing amber with mourning was not new. Already the ancient Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily made this link clear as he reported that amber was 'commonly used in connection with the mourning attending the death of the young'.[526] As Shannon Kelley has argued, Ovid draws a parallel between the Heliades grieving for Phaethon and trees exuding resin seasonally. In so doing, Ovid stages the story of amber's generation as a recurring event, and suggests both that amber is a relic of grief and that such a relic can recall the past.[527]

In the context of Francesco's *studiolo*, the story of the Heliades might refer to the memory of Lucrezia's untimely death, a traumatic experience for Francesco that would not fade with time. Mandel has suggested that the relationship between Francesco and Lucrezia was a relatively close one.[528] For example, Francesco commissioned Allessandro Allori to paint a portrait of himself holding a miniature with Lucrezia's likeness to commemorate his sister's

[525] See Andrew Feldherr, 'Metamorphosis in the Metamorphoses', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 171.

[526] Diodorus Siculus, *Historical Library*, trans. C. H. Oldfather, vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 5.23.4.

[527] Shannon Kelley, 'Amber, the Heliades, and the Poetics of Trauma in Marvell's "The Nymph Complaining"', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 55, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 160.

[528] Mandel, 'Santi Di Tito's Creation of Amber', 745.

departure for the Estense capital (Fig. 4.9).[529] While the commission could be explained by the importance of the Medici-Este dynastic alliance, it also shows signs of sibling affection.

Santi relies also on aspects of Lucrezia's public persona to make the Ovidian connection work. Lucrezia's personal *impresa* was the sun, with the motto exhorting her to energise and lighten.[530] In its Greek form—*ēlectron*—amber refers to a substance that 'shines and keeps shining',[531] a reminder of this material's similarity to the Heliades, who remained in close relation with their father Helios-Apollo (the Sun). The Sun-god Apollo was one of the most common personifications of Lucrezia's father Cosimo I, as attested by Domenico Poggini's statue of Cosimo-Apollo of 1559.[532] Soon after Lucrezia's death, a commemorative medal was commissioned with the duchess' profile on the obverse (Fig. 4.10). The reverse of the medal depicted the Fall of Phaethon and the motto 'New light shone on the Po' (NOVA•ERIDANO•FULXIT•LUX).[533] The linking of Lucrezia with Phaethon is clear. The medal thus compares the duchess to the young boy who died in the Po's waters, and marks her as worthy of collective grief and mourning. Santi aptly plays on this analogy between amber, death and youth in his own portrayal of Lucrezia. This is all the easier, given that the Ferrarese context

[529] Karla Langedijk, *The Portraits of the Medici, 15th-18th Centuries*, vol. 1 (Florence: Studio per edizioni scelte, 1981), 121–22.

[530] Gabrielle Langdon, *Medici Women: Portraits of Power, Love, and Betrayal from the Court of Duke Cosimo I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 141.

[531] J. M. Riddle, 'Amber, An Historical Etymological Problem', in *Laudatores Temporis Acti* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 110–20.

[532] William Paul Richelson, 'Studies in the Personal Imagery of Cosimo I De' Medici, Duke of Florence' (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1978), 25–78, 40.

[533] Mandel, 'Santi Di Tito's Creation of Amber', 737.

of the duchess's death fits squarely with the Estense belief in Phaethon's collapse into the Po, near the future site of Ferrara.[534]

As he imbues the *historia* with Ovidian tropes, Santi effectively contributes to perpetuating this belief. Santi's *Creation of Amber* makes a convincing connection between material and place because it brings up classical learning, amber's physical attributes, personal sentiment and the power of pictorial representation to draw these strands together into a meaningful whole. Amber's metamorphic character in this depiction becomes a placeholder for the interconnected tropes of bodily transformation, mourning, and material flux. Mixing indexicality with metonymy, Santi's *Creation of Amber* goes beyond representation, as it effectively brings about what it represents: amber's connection with the Po. While on the semantic level this painting is about metamorphosis, on a hermeneutic level it turns metamorphosis into a model of forensic investigation. Everything, whether a tree, a lizard trapped in an amber nodule or a chain of amber beads, has a story hidden in plain view ready to be told. Each such story can in turn act as a figure of analogy, merging the physical identity of the object with a set of human-made values embodied in the story. Indeed, the discursive imaginings of amber as a local material were driven by the belief that the medium can call up its own making. This shared nexus between material appearances and historical origins was an important stimulus to understanding amber as a native material.

In Santi's painting, the myths were speaking through artefacts, and the artefacts were speaking through myths. By means of this discursive oscillation—where metamorphosis was both the beginning and the end—beholders were encouraged to place amber's purported 'birth'

[534] Anthony Colantuono, 'Tears of Amber: Titian's *Andrians*, the River Po and the Iconology of Difference', in *Phaethon's Children: The Este Court and Its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara*, ed. Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 231.

in the location that Ovid sanctioned, and which the material qualities of amber reified. Beholders played an active role in this process as they saw in amber what they wanted to see, and smelled what they wanted to smell. Rejecting the accounts of those naturalists who identified amber as a bitumen extracted on the Baltic littoral, readers of Ovid embraced its nature as derivative of tree resin. From there, it was just one step to locating amber's origin by the Po. Ovid might have been a myth-maker, but the myth he helped to perpetuate was seemingly convincing enough to become a part of lived experience.

Self-Reflexivity

The Ovidian story of amber's creation in the Po Valley did indeed offer mental images that helped form historical views that lasted for generations. How exactly did these artefacts help solicit the Tuscan identifications of amber? Amber artefacts were often infused with self-reflexive rhetoric that to the willing evoked the Padan origin of the material. One striking example is the amber *Tazza* from the Museo degli Argenti in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence (Fig. 4.11). Attributed to the workshop of the Königsberg goldsmith Jacob Heise (active 1654–63), the *Tazza* is made from the slates of Baltic amber fitted together with a silver-gilt mount.[535] Documented in the Medici inventories since 1698 (but in the collection possibly prior to this), it was manufactured in the mid-seventeenth century, accordingly displaying the refined workmanship typical for the Königsberg artistic milieu. Although made in Königsberg—and from Baltic amber—this vessel confounds easy identification of style, artisanship and materials with the Baltic region. Already the design of the cup—with its grotesque ornament, and the

[535] Alfred Rohde, *Bernstein, ein deutscher Werkstoff: Seine künstliche Verarbeitung vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1937), 42; Marilena Mosco, 'Maria Maddalena of Austria: Amber', in *The Museo Degli Argenti: Collections and Collectors*, ed. Marilena Mosco and Ornella Casazza (Florence: Giunti, 2004), 105.

classicising panels depicting sea monsters—aligns this object with a broader international audience.

A Florentine beholder might look at the two female figures on the metal handles of the *Tazza*, and possibly take them as a commentary on their preferred Ovidian understanding of amber. With their arms stretching back, and their legs extending towards the bottom of the artefact, these figures fully embrace the silver-gilt handles of the cup. I would propose that given their nudity and confinement to the handgrips—suggesting captivity—these female figures could recall the Heliades. In fact, the figure of a naked woman turning into amber became a popular visual topos in the decoration of amber vessels. Alfred Rohde in his seminal monograph *Bernstein: ein deutscher Werkstoff* (1937) reproduces almost forty vessels of this kind.[536] It is crucial to emphasise, though, that the potential association of these figures with the Heliades is only possible given the nature of amber as a metamorphic material. The caryatid embracing the edges and limits of artworks and buildings was an iconographical form appearing in various materials ranging from gold and marble to coral and wood. But there is something particular about how the same types of figures evoke different hermeneutics when expressed in amber.

A closer look at these stretched-out bodies of the caryatids adorning the handles of the *Tazza* reveals areas where they disintegrate into rounded lumps of matter. Possibly, this calls up the transformation of the Heliades' bodies into amber nodules. While this interpretation is admittedly speculative, the bodies on the *Tazza* are clearly in the process of metamorphosis, thereby notionally evoking the creation of the material from which the *Tazza* is made. Crucially, beholders do not know whether the representation of the naked women is the index of metamorphosis, or merely a representation of it. The naked women are both amber statues and

[536] Rohde, *Bernstein*.

female figures turning into amber. Always in the state of flux, and potentially in dialogue with Ovid's account, these figures encourage the beholder to consider the amber itself as a metamorphic substance.

Indeed, this state of liminality is generated by the artistic medium. As viewers pondered these connections, they engaged with the contiguity between human flesh and amber. The user of the *Tazza* familiar with the Ovidian account—as most attendees at the Medici court would have been—likely took to heart the cup's ability to comment on its own materiality, and its liquid origin. But while in the Ovidian story it was the Heliades' tears that turned into amber, in the Pitti *Tazza,* the bodies of the nymphs break up into amber nodules. The form of the amber *Tazza* feeds the imaginations of the user, generating a discursive space where the myth of amber's metamorphic origin generates the artefact's form; and where the artefact's form in turn strengthens the appeal of the myth. The Ovidian story is a necessary element of this relation, while the *Tazza*'s form plays on amber's history by soliciting the user into active engagement. It was precisely through the rhetoric of metamorphosis that the user could read the *Tazza* as a self-reflexive object—speaking to its own alleged origin.

While potentially an ambiguous medium, amber underwent a transformation in Florence by generating an account of local origin, which was supported by both written accounts and the physical properties of amber itself. This is certainly the case with another object from the Medici collection—the *Tankard* (Fig. 4.12) by the workshop of the Königsberg goldsmith Georg Schreiber (active 1614–43). Made in yellow Baltic amber in the first half of the seventeenth century, the *Tankard* is covered by grotesque ornament, which makes its adherence to local Italian culture tenable. As in the case of the Pitti *Tazza*, the *Tankard*'s handle is adorned with the figure of a naked woman who turns into amber. This, again, may be one of the Heliades,

implicitly pointing the beholder to the myth of the creation of amber. The luminescent nature of amber would intensify in contact with light making a further connection with the Heliades who were daughters of the Sun. For such links to emerge, however, the *Tankard* had to be used in a milieu—such as the Medici court—which appreciated the appeal of the Ovidian myth. Once this condition was met, the form of the amber *Tankard* would begin to feed the imaginations of the user providing 'evidence' supporting the myth.

Conclusion: Amber's Horizontal Histories

The purported capacity of amber to reflect its own physical constitution is germane not just because it implies a process of discursive indigenisation, but rather because it reminds the art historian to always question associations of materials, artistic topoi and stylistic form with a specific region. In Florence, amber played a role in self-representations as much as it did in Poland and Prussia. It would be insensitive and historically inaccurate to insist on the primacy of the Baltic account if Florentines held a different view on what amber was and why it mattered.

Instead, focusing on amber's multiple belonging in different discourses—Florentine, Polish and Prussian (though there were, of course, others)—allows for a more horizontal narrative, one in which all these discourses matter equally. Such a new narrative complicates the history of Florentine art, which until recently has been treated largely from an Italo-centric perspective. It also shines a spotlight on the visual cultures of the Baltic region, which receive only marginal interest in Anglo-American art history. In fact, it took Piotrowski, an art historian from peripheral Poland, to define this new horizontal approach in ways that were then taken up

by key scholars of Anglo-American academe.[537] Piotrowski has decried the verticality of the typical art-historical narrative, with its implication of a hierarchy rooted on a handful of cities where the main artistic trends were instigated.[538] This is the conventional model of 'artistic influence'—the old idea that artistic traditions originate in one place and trickle down to another. Amber offers an evocative counterblast to such vertical framing of the history of art, not only because amber moved in a direction different from usual (here, it was from a purported periphery to the centre), but also because this artistic transfer exposes the centre's reliance on the so-called artistic periphery for its own master narrative (the role amber played in the identification of Tuscany as Etruria, for instance).

For Piotrowski, the starting point for the development of horizontal art histories should be in the deconstruction of the allegedly self-sufficient centre by attending to its dialogue with external traditions, particularly those of the so-called peripheries.[539] This chapter has provided an example of one such trans-cultural dialogue. Amber signified differently in the Baltic region than it did in Tuscany, even though it was the same material. But in both contexts it served an important role in foregrounding the local. Because this material formed self-perceptions of different separate regions, amber debunks the traditional dyads of influence/reception, self/other and native/foreign. As we have seen, the case of Baltic amber in Florence defies methodologies based on questions of stylistic precedence, causation and direct impact. Amber belongs equally to the history of Tuscany and that of Poland-Lithuania and Prussia, providing a good example of

[537] Piotrowski is cited or paraphrased in, for example, Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 43; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, 'Introduction: Reintroducing Circulations: Historiography and the Project of Global Art History', in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (Routledge, 2016), 2–3.

[538] Piotrowski, 'On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History', 378.

[539] Ibid., 380.

a horizontal art history that, in Piotrowski's words, ought to be 'polyphonic, multidimensional and free of geographical hierarchies'.[540]

[540] Ibid., 382.

Chapter 5

Of Mixed Origins: Tracing Michał Boym's *Sum Xu*

> [Images] are caught up in a movement of ebb and flood, of flux and reflux, now surfacing, now disappearing below the surface.
>
> Peter Mason, *The Lives of Images*.[541]

> And sometimes form, although it has become entirely void of meaning, will not only survive long after the death of its content, but will even unexpectedly and richly renew itself.
>
> Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*.[542]

The main protagonist of this chapter is an animal that never existed outside of representation. The product of overstretched artistic licence and cultural mistranslation, this enigmatic creature appeared as a woodcut (Fig. 5.1) in the treatise *Flora sinensis* (Vienna, 1656), written and illustrated by the Polish-Lithuanian Jesuit missionary to China, Michał Boym (1612–1659). Though a work of representation, Boym's animal was nonetheless treated as an actually existing species by subsequent generations of naturalists until the late nineteenth century. Yet because no one had ever seen it in the flesh, the images and descriptions of this animal, replicated by Boym's direct and indirect followers, needed to be rendered in altered form to stabilise the animal's identity. These visual and textual doubles were at once iconically correlated with

[541] Peter Mason, *The Lives of Images* (London: Reaktion, 2001), 12.

[542] Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 38.

Boym's original sign and semantically estranged from it. While claiming correspondence with the real, they were in fact creating a world of make-believe in which form and content collapsed into one, without having a prior original connection.

This creation, which lacked an obvious identifiable origin, came amidst ambiguity. Boym's exotic animal was, and still is, an intelligible sign. On a visual level, the print in the *Flora sinensis* depicts a small-sized furry creature with a stout body, a long tail, stocky limbs and a rounded head. It chases another animal that resembles a turtle. A caption above, both in Chinese and in Latin, confirms that the hunted animal is a 'green-winged turtle' (*Viridium alarum testudo*). The hunter, however, is only described as 松鼠 (*songshu*) in Chinese. The script is also rendered in its phonetic transcription as 'Sum Xu', but without specifying what this designation means in Latin. Curious in form, the illustration of an unknown specimen in Boym's volume thus truly confounds. Not only is it exotic, but also indecipherable as it could not be compared to any animal that the intended audience of European beholders would know from first-hand experience.

Despite difficulties in identification, the image of the furry animal in Boym's volume was taken up widely in subsequent natural histories. A large part of the *Sum Xu*'s appeal was that it provided one of the earliest visual renditions of the south-east Asian fauna previously unknown to European naturalists.[543] Boym's authorship of this ground-breaking work is noteworthy. In the face of a near-absolute absence of Polish-Lithuanian contributions to early modern representations of a rapidly expanding early modern world, the Polish-Lithuanian Jesuit offers a

[543] The *Flora Sinensis* came illustrated with the engravings of twenty-one plants and eight animals—China, however, was the natural habitat for only some of these species. Boym's volume was the first European treatise to contain images of Chinese fauna. Apart from the *Sum Xu Chasing a Green-Winged Turtle*, the *Flora sinensis* contained three other representations of Chinese animals. See Michał Boym, *Flora sinensis: fructus floresque humillime porrigens …* (Vienna: Typis Matthaei Rictij, 1656).

reassessment of the periphery's role in consolidating knowledge of the unknown. Anglo-American art historians, with a number of notable exceptions,[544] have generally treated peripheral milieus like Poland-Lithuania as passive recipients of cultural exports from the cultural centres of western Europe.[545] Boym defies this characterisation. Although a Pole who was educated entirely in the Jesuit colleges on the edges of Europe, he nonetheless was the author of an illustrated volume that has rightly been called a pioneering sinological study.[546] The images in the *Flora sinensis*, in particular, warrant attention. Not only do they represent east Asian specimens, many of them previously unknown to Europeans in the seventeenth century, but they also bring about a new visual idiom rooted on the stylistic tradition that the author encountered in China. Boym evidently used the visual images in Chinese compendia of knowledge for some of the illustrations in the *Flora sinensis*, transferring the style in the process of copying.[547] He would have had few objections to do so, given the notion of seventeenth-century China as a sophisticated and refined ancient culture worthy of European respect.[548] While acting as a cross-cultural mediator, in the context of European naturalist imagery, Boym was an innovator.

The scholars of Boym have foregrounded the importance of this Jesuit from Poland-Lithuania for early modern sinology,[549] pinpointing Boym's impact on the better known Jesuit

[544] Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*; Białostocki, *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe*.

[545] For a critical review of this tendency, see Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, 163–64.

[546] Kajdański, *Michała Boyma Opisanie Świata*, 9.

[547] Chiara Bocci, 'The Animal Section in Boym's (1612-1659) Flora Sinensis: Portentous Creatures, Healing Stones, Venoms, and Other Curiosities', *Monumenta Serica* 59 (2011): 353–81.

[548] Dawn Odell, 'Creaturely Invented Letters and Dead Chinese Idols', in *Idols in the Age of Art*, ed. Michael Cole and Rebecca Zorach (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 270.

[549] It is hard to assess the press run of the *Flora sinensis*, and thus its impact. We may assume, however, that it was sent to many Jesuit colleges, the number of which amounted to 372 in the early seventeenth century. See Thomas Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 152. The Jesuits were a large group to consume naturalist literature—by 1640 their number stretched over 16,000 souls. See Peter Burke,

figures, Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) and Martino Martini (1614–1661).[550] The rhetoric these scholars have used is that of historical revisionism: they claim that Boym was an important figure forgotten by the historians of science and visual culture, but his authority as a sinologist and originality as an illustrator call for Boym's incorporation into the canons of natural history and the history of art. I will take this argument a step further. In my view, the importance of Boym for the study of early modern naturalist imagery lies not in his originality, though beyond doubt his work stands out. My interest, instead, lies in Boym's potential to unsettle the very paradigm of origin that has for so long denied the periphery an equal standing in the study of visual culture. The key aim of this chapter is to 'provincialise' the centre by dismantling its role as the alleged site of originary creation, which then gradually trickled down to the periphery.[551]

This chapter charts the long visual ancestry and erratic succession line of one particular image in Boym's *Flora sinensis*, the curious *Sum Xu*. Studying the *Sum Xu*'s vicissitudes will reveal the centre to have been merely one of the many stop-overs in the life of an image. Embracing such non-centric framework to study the circulation of images, my intent is to dissipate the idea of origin by being attentive to multiple sources and unpredictable mutations. The task of extracting the cult of modern originality from early modern visual creations is, of

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'The Jesuits and the Art of Translation', in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 29. Some idea of the original readership of the *Flora sinensis* may also be inferred from the relatively high survival of Boym's volume. The search engine WorldCat lists twelve extant copies in the following libraries: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel; National Library Warsaw; Harvard University Library; Cincinnati History Library and Archives; Sterling Morton Library; University of South Florida Library; UC Berkeley Libraries; Royal Botanic Gardens Kew; Cambridge University Library; Bibliotheque de l'Institut de France; Accademia dei Georgofili Florence; Sächsische Landesbibliothek—Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden. Furthermore, I have verified copies in the following libraries: British Library; Bibliothèque national de France; Université de Namur—Bibliothèque universitaire Moretus Plantin; Bibliothèque universitaire—Pharmacie Montpellier.

[550] Paul Pelliot, 'Michel Boym', *T'oung Pao* 31, no. 1/2 (1934): 95–151; Boleslaw Szczesniak, 'The Writings of Michael Boym', *Monumenta Serica* 14 (1955): 481–538; Edward Kajdański, 'Between Science and Art: Drawings of Michael Boym to His Work on China', in *Poland-China: Art and Cultural Heritage*, ed. Joanna Wasilewska (Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2011), 125–30.

[551] For the idea of provincialising the centre, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

course, itself not that original; art historians have already been following in the footsteps of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, challenging the autonomy of authorship and dispersing originality into an endless web of interconnected cultural processes.[552] Engagement with Boym's work, however, offers a rare case where it is possible to move a significant distance beyond the alleged point of origin both in a backward and forward direction, thus witnessing how the previous lives of an image, as well as its afterlives, destabilise the concept of origin as an authorial act tied to a single creation.

In tracing the *Sum Xu*'s erratic journey through space and time, I foreground random connections, fault lines, and unexpected mutations instead of originary creative moments. Such concentration stems partly from Boym's peripheral standing vis-à-vis the historically better recognised Kircher and Martini, whose predominance in early sinology has side-lined the Pole's contributions into indirect channels of the diffusion of visual knowledge. This treatment of the author from Poland-Lithuania corresponds with the prevailing notion of the periphery as a site of consumption and mediation rather than the place of originary creation. The *Sum Xu*'s previous incarnations and afterlives will demonstrate, however, that when it comes to the circulation of artistic form, there is little difference between centre and periphery. In both cases, studying the vicissitudes of the *Sum Xu* reveals a wide variety of sources, which continued to expand during the entire life span of the image. Distributed spatially and temporally, these multiple sources remained aggregate and mixed. In offering such an evocative case against the idea of singular creation, the *Sum Xu* offers cues on how to build a more inclusive history of the image. Although

[552] Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142–48; Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 321–34. For a critical engagement with this theory and others by an early modernist, see Maria H. Loh, *Titian Remade: Repetition and the Transformation of Early Modern Italian Art* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007); Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008).

I begin this enquiry at the periphery of art-historical discourse—with a little-known naturalist illustration authored by a Polish-Lithuanian Jesuit—I will end by suggesting an importance of the periphery for the history of the image. In expanding the scope of visual enquiry, this chapter thus purports to address the ways in which the study of visual culture may be renewed both for and from the margins.

Dispersed Authorship

Although several non-illustrated accounts of Chinese natural history had existed in Europe prior to the publication of Boym's volume,[553] the graphic images of the Chinese fauna in the *Flora sinensis* had the power to preoccupy early modern naturalists in ways that the preceding texts did not. In the words of one naturalist, John Ray (1627–1705), 'a good Figure [has] this advantage of a verbal description that it conveys speedily to the mind with ease and pleasure a clearer and truer Idea of the thing delineated, then the understanding can with much labour and in a long time form to itself in a description, be it never so exact'.[554] Boym's *Sum Xu* was meant to serve such a descriptive function, but it failed to convey in intelligible visual language what exactly it represented. What was the *Sum Xu*? The written descriptions of animals in the *Flora sinensis* adhere to conventional modes—defining a species' appearance, behaviour and distribution, sometimes followed by its use value, including medicinal properties.[555] The image of the *Sum*

[553] Some zoological information was provided in Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado em que se cõtam muito por estẽso as cousas da China*, 1569–70; Martín de Rada, *Relación de la cosas de China*, 1576; Martino Martini, *Atlas novus sinensis*, Amsterdam, 1653; and Álvaro Semedo, *Historica relatione del gran regno della Cina*, Rome, 1653. Moreover, Johannes Schreck Terrentius's unpublished manuscript *Plinius indicus*, an encyclopaedia of the flora and fauna of India and China originally designed to appear in two volumes was available in the Vatican. See Bocci, 'The Animal Section in Boym's Flora Sinensis', 355.

[554] John Ray, *Further Correspondence of John Ray*, ed. Robert Gunther (London: Ray Society, 1928), 99.

[555] Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing*, 181–82.

Xu, however, breaks with usual visual conventions, making viewers wonder what animal they actually saw rendered on paper.

As noted, on the most basic level, the engraving depicts a furry animal chasing a turtle. A diagonal line filled with green hand-colouring marks a grass-covered slope, which the animals glide down. Both the hill and the animals are represented schematically. The furry creature—rendered *Sum Xu* in the Portuguese-inflected Romanisation of the Chinese characters 松鼠—is depicted in a crude two-dimensional manner. Only the tip of its muzzle is represented in a three-quarter view, with the left whisker and eye sprouting from the corresponding part of the animal's body. On the whole, the *Sum Xu* is depicted in profile, with only two paws rendered in the print. On the right-hand side, the beholder can recognise a turtle—described in Chinese as 绿毛龟 (*lümaogui)*, transcribed as *Lo mae quey*, and referred to in Latin as *Viridium alarum testudo* (green-winged turtle). The terrapin is rendered from a different viewing point. Although its single hind leg is represented in profile, the turtle's neck and plastron are engraved frontally. Effectively, the viewer can see both the front legs and the neck twisting. This visual effect draws the reptile closer to the more conventional illustrations in early modern naturalist treatises.

Nonetheless, in comparison with other images in European 'histories of animals', Boym's engraving has been rendered in a curious stylistic idiom, thus potentially undermining its credibility and usefulness for the beholder.[556] When contrasted with illustrations of the ferret and the polecat (Fig. 5.2) in Conrad Gesner's *Icones animalium quadrupedum* (1553), or the squirrel (Fig. 5.3) in Ulisse Aldrovandi's *De quadrupedibus digitatis* (1645), the *Sum Xu* fails to realistically render body movement, falls short of full three-dimensionality, and lacks intelligible textual description. Effectively, the *Sum Xu* is simultaneously decontextualized and

[556] On the credibility of naturalist images, see Ibid., 198–99; Kusukawa, *Picturing the Book of Nature*, 163–77.

recontextualized as a detached object of naturalist scrutiny. It signifies the unknown and the wondrous, producing a representational effect that we could denote as 'the exotic'.[557]

The linguistic obscurity of the accompanying verbal descriptions in particular impaired the credibility of Boym's imagery. The naturalist included captions in Chinese script, together with transliterations, perhaps in an attempt to persuade the reader that the authority of the material in the *Flora sinensis* rested on original Chinese sources and first-hand information. His knowledge of China was vindicated by a half-a-decade sojourn in the country, an experience that he lays out in the preamble to the reader.[558]

Born in the Ruthenian city of Lviv (Polish Lwów, German Lemberg) into a wealthy burgher family of Hungarian origin, Boym joined the Cracow branch of the Society of Jesus in 1629.[559] Having unsuccessfully applied to go on a mission to the Middle Kingdom twelve times, he was finally allowed to set sail in 1643.[560] He arrived in Macau at the end of 1644, and spent the following six years in south-east China learning the language, collecting information about local natural history and medicine, and absorbing the country's customs.[561] In 1649, Boym was sent by the Canton-based Vice-Provincial of the China mission with a diplomatic legacy to the Zhaoqing court of the Yongli Emperor, the last ruler of the Southern Ming dynasty who was then fighting his final battle against the ascending Qing. The Canton-based Jesuits offered mediation with the European powers in exchange for the conversion of key figures at the Ming court, an offer partially fulfilled by the christening of the empress and some other courtiers. In Zhaoqing,

[557] Mason, *Infelicities*, 1–6.

[558] Boym, *Flora Sinensis*, unpaginated preface.

[559] Stanisław Załęski, *Jezuici w Polsce*, vol. 2 (Kraków: L. Anczyc, 1905), 592.

[560] For Boym's unsuccessful petitions, see Monika Miazek-Męczyńska, '*Indipetae Boymianae*: On Boym's Requests to the Jesuit General for a Missionary Appointment to China', *Monumenta Serica* 59 (2011): 229–42.

[561] Monika Miazek, 'Michal Boym: Polish Jesuit in the Service of the Ming Dynasty', *Chinese Cross Currents* 5, no. 2 (March 2008): 82–84.

Boym was entrusted with the task of presenting the plight of the Ming to the Portuguese king and the pope, asking for support.[562] The Jesuit arrived in Rome in 1652, but was kept under house arrest in Loreto until 1655; the then Superior General of the Society, Gosvinus Nickel, was concerned that Boym's legacy might endanger the Jesuit missions in northern and central China, which had already accepted the Manchu rule.[563] It is possibly during this time that Boym wrote the *Flora sinensis*, and began preparing an atlas of China, which was never to be published. Eventually, Boym received a vague letter of support from Pope Alexander VII for the christened members of the Ming dynasty, and could travel back to China via Lisbon. He died on 22 August 1659 while trying to reach the embattled Ming whose domain was then reduced to the Yunnan province in the south-west.[564] Fortuitously, Boym had sent the *Flora sinensis* to the printers in Vienna before departing for his last journey.

While conveying his command of the language, and thus an ability to access otherwise inaccessible accounts, the use of Chinese script brings an element of epistemological emptiness to Boym's work, as not many readers would actually understand it. The *Flora Sinensis* is an illustrated naturalist treatise, and—as such—the brief descriptions accompanying illustrations in the volume should act as mediators, supplying information about the images of species unknown to Europeans. However, in the face of the *Sum Xu*'s exotic unfamiliarity, the captions add another layer of representation indecipherable for the reader, further complicating the didactic functions of the plate. The Chinese characters 松鼠 and 绿毛龟render the images more abstruse. Unlike Gesner's *Icones animalium quadrupedum*, where—in order to aid the viewer in acquiring

[562] David E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 139.

[563] Pelliot, 'Michel Boym', 128–29.

[564] Miazek, 'Michal Boym', 92–94.

knowledge—captions are provided in Latin, Italian, French and German (including regional variations),[565] the linguistic signs in the woodcut of the *Sum Xu* generate ambiguity.

The taxonomic captions fall short of signification particularly with regard to the unidentifiable animal *Sum Xu*. The 'green-winged turtle' is less cryptic, as the name of this species has been translated into Latin. The image itself makes an easy case, too, since the animal is readily conceivable as a 'turtle'. The *Sum Xu* offers a trickier case. The name of the species does not appear in Latin: the viewer is merely offered the Chinese characters and their Romanisation, amplifying the effects of epistemological distance. The succinct description that Boym offers in the same page opening (Fig. 5.4) does not elucidate the case much further:

> The *Sum Xu* is an animal from China; coloured yellow and black, and of beautiful appearance. The Chinese tame this animal and make it wear a silver collar. It is an excellent hunter of mice. They often cost seven to nine scudi.[566]

The only information this laconic commentary provides is the *Sum Xu*'s appearance—diverging slightly from the image, which renders the animal only in yellow.[567] Boym's narration also provides a rudimentary account of the *Sum Xu*'s behaviour—the animal appears to be valued as a pet, and a good mouser. However, the beholders learn no detailed morphological information that would enable them to compare this animal to anything they knew, let alone to learn what the *Sum Xu* actually represented. Clad in such stylistically unintelligible form, the *Sum Xu* is an

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[565] Conrad Gesner, *Icones animalium: quadrupedum viviparorum et oviparorum, quae in Historia Animalium Conradi Gesneri describuntur, cum nomenclaturis singulorum latinis, italicis, gallicis et germanicis plerunque, per certos ordines digestae* (Zurich, 1553).

[566] 'Sum Xu animal apud Sinas reperitur, flavi & nigri coloris est, pulcherrimi aspectus. Cicurant illiud Sinenses & collum argento exornant, mures egregriè venatur. Saepe venit septem & novem scudis.' Boym, *Flora Sinensis*, L2r.

[567] Most surviving copies of the *Flora sinesis* contain uncoloured black-and-white illustrations. Probably only the copies sold or given to elite patrons were coloured using Boym's lost drawing as a template. See Miazek, *Flora Sinensis Michała Boyma*, 165.

exotic enigma. The very few European scholars who could read Chinese (mostly Jesuits) would have perhaps connected the *Sum Xu* with the squirrel, as this is indeed how one translates the linguistic signifier denoting Boym's specimen; in the modern *pinyin* transcription it would be rendered *songshu*—meaning 'pine mouse'. This lexical meaning would have remained ambiguous, however, even to those early modern naturalists who read the Chinese language. For the *Sum Xu* does not in the slightest resemble the Eurasian red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), which would have been familiar to European viewers.

The semantic volatility of the *Sum Xu* is as much an issue today as it was in the seventeenth century. It proves impossible to identify the exact species that functioned as the model for the image in the *Flora sinensis*. Boym remains silent about whether he knew the animal from autopsy, or whether he only developed knowledge of it based on hear-say or illustrations in Chinese printed compendia. Although Boym's biographers maintain that the author was fluent in Chinese,[568] it is possible he used the linguistic sign *songshu* (squirrel, literally 'pine mouse') against his better judgment to stand for the image of an animal that was neither a squirrel nor a mouse. In the traditional Chinese system of classification, the squirrel is perceived—on the basis of its morphologic similitude—as belonging to the category of 'mice' (*shu*). To this end, the most celebrated late Ming medical encyclopaedia—*Bencao gangmu* (Compendium of Materia Medica) by the physician Li Shizhen (1518–1593)—groups the ground squirrel (*huangshu*) together with the vole (*shishu*), the marmot (*tuboshu*), the sable (*diaoshu*), the mole (*yanshu*), the weasel (*youshu*), the house mouse (*xishu*), and the snake-eating mouse (*shisheshu*).[569] Boym's modern biographers assert that the author owned a copy of this celebrated

[568] Bocci, 'The Animal Section in Boym's Flora Sinensis', 356.

[569] Li Shizhen, *Compendium of Materia Medica (Bencao Gangmu)*, trans. Luo Xiwen, Book 6 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2003), 4104–123. The first edition of the *Bencao gangmu* was published in 1596. The original

compendium.[570] In this context, while describing and drawing the 'pine mouse' (which was not described in the *Bencao gangmu*), Boym might have conflated a number of descriptions, stories and images into one. The effect of such epistemological disorientation was the construction of an amalgamate species that combined unrelated animals, descriptions and representations.

It is, of course, impossible to ascertain Boym's exact source, but the illustration of a squirrel in *Master Gu's Catalogue of Painting*, first published in 1603 (Fig. 5.5) seems the most likely scenario.[571] The woodcut depicts a squirrel climbing down a pine tree. In a kind of visual pun, this scenery alludes to the Chinese name for this animal, 'pine mouse'; there is even a pine cone growing out of the tree branch to make the connection more obvious for the Chinese reader. The album in which the animal appears was compiled by Gu Bing (c. 1594–1603), a professional artist, as a visual aid for the appreciation of painting, especially for those relatively uninitiated viewers who might need to expand their knowledge of artists of the past.[572] Each illustration in *Master Gu's Catalogue of Painting* depicts a famous artist's trademark subject matter, style and composition. The image of the squirrel is, as the text explains, a graphic rendition of the now lost painting attributed to Tao Cheng, a fifteenth-century painter of animals and landscapes. Gu Bing's image was thus an afterlife of another image, fortuitously extending its lifespan even after the painting's physical disappearance.

1,109 illustrations, which had not been of particularly good quality, were revised in 1596, and then even further in 1640, with new woodcuts added. See Carla Nappi, *The Monkey and the Inkpot: Natural History and Its Transformations in Early Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 52.

[570] Bocci, 'The Animal Section in Boym's Flora Sinensis', 356; Boleslaw Szczesniak, 'The Atlas and Geographic Description of China: A Manuscript of Michael Boym (1612-1659)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 73, no. 2 (1953): 76, doi:10.2307/595362. According to Szcześniak, Boym's copy of the 1596 edition of the *Bencao gangmu* was owed by Andreas Cleyer after Boym's second journey to China. Cleyer sold it to the Electoral Library in Berlin. It burnt during WWII.

[571] Many thanks to Mengge Cao for drawing my attention to this woodcut, and to Zifeng Zhao for helping with translations from the Chinese.

[572] J. P. Park, 'Art, Print, and Cultural Discourse in Early Modern China', in *A Companion to Chinese Art*, ed. Martin J. Powers and Katherine R. Tsiang (London: Wiley, 2016), 80–81; Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in the Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 58.

Boym's drawing of the *Sum Xu*, which he sent to the printers in Vienna, has not survived, so we cannot compare it with Gu Bing's squirrel.[573] That being the case, we nonetheless receive a possible stylistic anchor for Boym's lost drawing of the *Sum Xu* in a similar image (Fig. 5.6) on the margin of Boym's map of the Yunnan province in the unpublished atlas of China in the Vatican Library.[574] This is a manuscript consisting of eighteen maps of Chinese provinces. Each map contains a representation of an animal or plant characteristic of the region.[575] These drawings were made on separate sheets and were then glued onto the map.[576] Given the similarity between these drawings and the prints in the *Flora sinensis*, it is likely that the lost drawing of the *Sum Xu* was similar in form to the image in the unpublished atlas of China. The closeness of Gu Bing's squirrel and the *Sum Xu* in the *Flora Sinensis* adds further credibility to this hypothesis. If the Vatican drawing is a counterpart for the lost design sent to the printers in Vienna, this would mean that Boym did not change the image too much. He copied an image that itself was a copy of a previous artefact. Boym only added a hind limb to Gu's prototype. Boym's

[573] Walravens, 'Flora Sinensis Revisited', 344.

[574] Joanna Wasilewska-Dobkowska has suggested that Bom's drawings, maps and notes in the Vatican Library could have been made in collaboration with Andrew Zheng, Chinese convert to Christianity who assisted Boym on his journey to Europe. Zheng could have been the sole author of these drawings. Moreover, he could have rendered the Chinese inscriptions. At the same time, Wasilewska-Dobkowska speculates that some Chinese characters in the Vatican 'atlas of China' show signs of hand's uncertainty, thus suggesting these inscriptions were written by Boym himself rather than Zheng; see her Joanna Wasilewska-Dobkowska, *Pióropusze i turbany: wizerunek mieszkańców Azji w sztuce jezuitów polskich XVII i XVIII wieku* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2006), 150–51. Edward Kajdański has hinted that some of the original images were gifts to Boym; Kajdański, *Michała Boyma Opisanie Świata*, 33. Another possible author is Joseph Ko, Boym's scholar-assistant in China. See Bocci, 'The Animal Section in Boym's Flora Sinensis', 356, n. 11.

[575] Szczesniak, 'The Atlas and Geographic Description of China'.

[576] Some drawings in the maps are made on the special Chinese paper for drawing and calligraphy. Even the maps themselves are made on European paper, it does not mean that had to be made in Europe—we know that the Jesuits in Macau had access to European paper. See Kajdański, *Michała Boyma Opisanie Świata*, 28. Joanna Wasilewska-Dobkowska asserts that these drawings are made on European paper. The technique is also European: pen and ink. It was most likely black initially, but has now turned brown, which suggests the use of iron gall ink. They first get brown, and they into the paper causing break-troughs and paper cavity. See Wasilewska-Dobkowska, *Pióropusze i turbany*, 151.

competitor and fellow Jesuit, Martino Martini (1614–1661),[577] gives a view on Chinese painting that suggests why Boym might have made this addition:

> As for their painting, [the Chinese] are much inferior to us: they do not yet understand how to represent the shade, and how to mix and soften the colours. Though they excel in birds and flowers, which they sew with needle on silk tapestries so genuinely that we would not better imitate them, or represent from as in nature.[578]

Wary of this criticism of Chinese painting, Boym added a hind limb in an attempt to convey three-dimensionality and to make the image appear more naturalistic.

The engraving in the *Flora sinensis* (Fig. 5.1) goes even further in this direction. Differences between the Vatican drawing of the *Sum Xu* and the print in the *Flora sinensis*, while not striking, suggest an effort on the part of the engraver to translate the imagery in the printed volume into European conventions of naturalist illustration. For example, the *Sum Xu*'s body in the engraving (Fig. 5.1) seems better coordinated, with the limbs, tail and head rendered in a more customary manner than in the Vatican drawing (Fig. 5.6). The head of the Vienna *Sum Xu* (Fig. 5.1) has been given an additional touch-up, with emphasis on the distinctive representation of eyes and the muzzle.

It is not possible to know who deemed the stylistic modifications to the original drawing necessary: Boym himself; Boym's Viennese publisher Matthäus Rickhes; or possibly the

[577] On rivalry between Boym and Martini, see Paul Rule, 'The Jesuits and the Ming-Qing Transition: How Did Biym and Martini Find Themselves on Opposite Sides?', *Monumenta Serica* 59 (2011): 243–58; Noël Golvers, 'Michael Boym and Martino Martini: A Contrastive Portrait of Two China Missionaries and Mapmakers', *Monumenta Serica* 59 (2011): 259–71.

[578] 'Pour la peinture ils nous sont de beaucoup inferieurs, comme n'ayants pas encor compris ce qu'il faut observer dans les ombrages, ni comment il faut mesler & adoucir les couleurs : mais ils reüsissent fort bien en oiseaux & en fleurs, qu'ils representement avec l'aiguille & en tapisserie de soye si naïvement, qu'on ne sauroit mieux les imiter ni representer au naturel.' Martino Martini, *Atlas Novus Sinensis* (Amsterdam, 1655), 7.

Superior General of the Society of Jesus?[579] Whomever this might be, the differences between the Vatican and the Vienna versions of the *Sum Xu* imply the process of visual accommodation.[580] The stylistic changes evident in this shift bring forward the dependence of European practitioners of natural history on the standardisation of methods of observation and conventions of representation.[581] For an exotic specimen to appear in a naturalist publication, the image-maker had to achieve perceptible pictorial compatibility with nature.[582] Although—given the coded nature of these expectations—it would be an exaggeration to assume that early modern viewers expected total verisimilitude or referential illusion from naturalist illustration,[583] they nonetheless operated in a system where a certain kind of imagery was deemed useful in the process of acquiring and memorising knowledge.

Boym displays awareness of other naturalists' expectations when he describes the Vatican drawings as 'genuine images' (*genuines imagines*).[584] This remark appears in a short epistle to the viewer ('Ad Lectorem') on the first map of the unpublished 'atlas of China', which represents the outline of the whole empire. Similarly, in the preliminary epistle to the *Flora*

[579] Kajdański asserts that given Boym insubordination in Venice upon his return from China in 1652, Boym's manuscripts could have been confiscated by the Jesuits. He himself was put under internment in Loreto. See Kajdański, *Michała Boyma Opisanie Świata*, 32. At any rate, Jesuits could publish work only after receiving permission from the Superior General whose acceptance was acknowledged on all published volumes. See also Walravens, 'Flora Sinensis Revisited', 343.

[580] Hal Foster defines *visuality* as the historical techniques of vision; although it is a social fact, it is also rooted in the embodied sense of sight. See Hal Foster, 'Preface', in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1998), ix.

[581] Steven J. Harris, 'Networks of Travel, Correspondence, and Exchange', in *The Cambridge History of Science*, ed. Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 356.

[582] Peter Galison, 'Judgment against Objectivity', in *Picturing Science, Producing Art*, ed. Caroline A. Jones and Peter Galison (New York: Routledge, 1998), 328.

[583] Roland Barthes refers to this kind of realism—rooted in the correspondence theory of truth—as 'reality effect'. See Roland Barthes, 'The Reality Effect', in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 141–49.

[584] Wasilewska-Dobkowska, *Pióropusze i turbany*, 161.

sinensis, Boym underlines the novelty of many images in the volume. The self-proclaimed life-likeness of these images is treated as evidence for their authenticity:

> This little book makes available to your worthy eyes the principal fruits and trees of India and China, as well as some spices and a few Chinese animals that the Chinese have that we do not. Farewell, o the most humane Reader. You cannot taste these plants, but you can recreate them with your eyes, and from these works you can contemplate God the Creator.[585]

Boym's explicit rhetoric of authenticity and curiosity suggests a clear attempt to give visual credibility to the engravings in the *Flora sinensis* via articulation of the author's authority as an eye-witness of the Chinese natural world. These illustrations were in principle mimetic devices that acted as testimony, facilitating what historians of science Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin have called 'virtual witnessing'.[586] The creation and maintenance of knowledge of exotic fauna was dependent on the credibility of sources of information, be they stuffed specimens, images advertised as 'genuine', or verbal accounts provided by travellers who visited far-away lands.[587] It was Boym's authorship that gave the *Sum Xu* the stamp of credibility. The *Sum Xu* was taken seriously despite its stylistic ambiguity precisely because it appeared in a volume authored by a scholar of unquestioned credentials: a man who had been to China, and had access—or at least so was believed—to first-hand knowledge of the exotic fauna.

We have seen that Boym did not draw this animal 'from life'. The resemblance between Gu Bing's squirrel and the drawing in the Vatican atlas of China makes it very likely that Boym

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[585] 'Libellus praecipuos Indiarum et Sinarum fructus et arbores, aliquas etiam Aromaticas, et non nulla animalia, quae Sinenses praeter nostratia habent, tuis humanissimis oculis obiicit. Vale humanissime Lector et saltem oculos, si palatum non potes, recrea, universorumque Creatorem ex illius admirabilibus operibus contemplare.' In Boym, *Flora Sinensis*, intro.

[586] Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 62.

[587] See Claudia Swan, 'Ad vivum, naer het leven, from the life: Defining a mode of representation', *Word & Image* 11, no. 4 (1995): 369.

had a copy of *Master Gu's Catalogue of Painting* before his eyes when drawing the *Sum Xu*. Yet despite Boym's blatant imitation, his act of mimesis did in fact create something new. Indeed, it is not at all certain that Boym's *Sum Xu* was the same animal as Gu's squirrel. The conjectural make-up of the *Sum Xu* continues to confound, and modern zoological science remains unable to identify the species in the *Flora sinensis*.

Many interpretative scenarios are possible. As per the linguistic signifier *songshu* deployed by Boym to describe this animal, the author could have indeed depicted a type of south-east Asian squirrel (Fig. 5.7). The species of the Sciuridae (the family of squirrels) that most resembles the specimen in Boym's treatise is the cream-coloured giant squirrel (*Ratufa affinis*). Although these rodents do not naturally live in China—their only natural habitats are in south-east Asia—the Chinese may have imported these animals, which would explain the high price of seven to nine scudi reported by Boym.[588] But the author could have also had in mind some animal from the *Mustelidae* family (mustelids). The fur of the yellow-throated marten (*Martes flavigula*) is a unique blend of black and brownish-yellow, closely matching Boym's description (Fig. 5.8).[589] Another candidate for the mysterious *Sum Xu*, the Siberian weasel (*Mustela sibirica*), is bright reddish in colour with a dark muzzle, also matching Boym's image—and partly the description (Fig. 5.9). Zoologist Bernard E. Reed (1887–1949) claims that Siberian weasels were employed by the Chinese to repel poisonous snakes, and were taken out

[588] It is difficult to know what coinage Boym had in mind. Given that he likely wrote the *Flora sinensis* during his house arrest in Loreto, he might refer to the Papal States silver scudo, In early seventeenth century Rome, a skilled mason made about 85 scudi a year; he would need to spend a month wages to afford a *sumxu*. See Franco Mormando, *Bernini: His Life and His Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), xvii–xviii.

[589] The yellow-throated marten preys on many animals, including rats, mice, hares, snakes, lizards, and even young wapiti, spotted deer, roe deer and goral. This omnivorous diet may link it with the *Sum Xu*'s apparent appetite for mice (in Boym's text), and tortoises (in the image). See Reginald Innes Pocock, *The Fauna of British India*, vol. 2 (London: Taylor and Francis, 1939), 336; Vladimir G. Geptner and et al., *Mammals of the Soviet Union*, vol. 2, Part 2 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Libraries, 2001), 915–917.

on hunting trips as a protective measure.[590] This allusion to the easy domestication of the Siberian weasel corresponds with the reference to silver collars in the *Flora Sinensis*, clearly pointing to the *Sum Xu*'s status as a domestic animal. The small Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*), and the crab-eating mongoose (*Herpestes urva*) might also pass for the *Sum Xu* (Fig. 5.10), since both species eat just about anything else they can catch, including mice. Chiara Bocci has demonstrated that mongooses were kept as pets by the Portuguese in seventeenth-century Macau who appreciated them as good mousers. They were valued at 'ten pieces of gold', which also shows similarities with Boym's Sum Xu.[591] The multiplicity of possible identifications for the *Sum Xu* confirms the difficulty of defining this species in taxonomical terms.

The inconclusiveness of the potential referent for Boym's image in the *Flora sinensis* prompts new ways of understanding the circulation of images between cultures in early modernity. Since our own incomprehension of this image makes its reception somewhat comparable with that of early modern Europeans who also found it incomprehensible, we may thus take this artefact as parabolic of seventeenth-century reception of unfamiliar and exotic things. Referring to the early modern conundrum of describing newly discovered non-European species, historian of science Paula Findlen has called the representations of these animals and plants 'things without names'.[592] This designation aptly expresses the inadequacy of words and images for species that had no corollary in Europe. In this way, the vagueness of verbal and visual signs can be seen as attempts to make up for the absence of the thing itself. Boym's exotic animal is a limit case, as its existence has never been verified by comparison to a living

[590] Bernard E. Read, *Chinese Materia Medica: Animal Drugs* (Beijing: Peking Natural History Bulletin, 1931), nos. 396, 398, 402A; Kajdański, *Michała Boyma opisanie świata*, 167.

[591] Bocci, 'The Animal Section in Boym's Flora Sinensis', 363–364.

[592] Findlen, 'Natural History'.

specimen. In this context, the text and image sanctioned by Boym's authorial voice remain the only media conveying the *Sum Xu*'s authenticity. These performative utterances thus call the species to life. They are not merely an iconic correspondence with the real, which in this case is more of a make-believe, but rather they engage with the viewer in ways that create the real. Thus these signs function not only as *representation*, but also as *presentation*.[593] They activate the presence of a non-existent species via the means of visual language that not only signifies, but creates.

The volatility of the textual and visual signifiers of the *Sum Xu* allowed them to take on a life of their own. The visual and verbal expressions in Boym's *Flora sinensis* came to stand for the thing itself. The making of the *Sum Xu* therefore seems based on a trans-mediation of the woodcuts and texts in a Chinese painting compendium—as well as of verbal accounts and possibly live specimens—into Boym's drawings. Although Master Gu's woodcut likely prompted Boym to conceive of the *Sum Xu*, it does not mean that the Sum Xu was a squirrel. It is more likely that this animal was the point of intersection at which a plurality of cultural signs converged to create an aggregate species that never existed in the physical world. Like so many other early modern images, the *Sum Xu* was caught up in a movement of flux and reflux, surfacing in the work of Boym, and yet always in danger of disappearing.[594] Reception of the Sum Xu was both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception of this image, the species was brought to life.[595]

[593] Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History*, 55; Mason, *Infelicities*, 2.

[594] For the idea of lives of images, see Mason, *The Lives of Images*, 12.

[595] See Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4.

As a naturalist, Boym's job was to convert the unfamiliar into the explicable. But as a draughtsman, he suspended the same rare specimen in a perpetual state of exoticism.[596] The *Sum Xu*'s appearance in the *Flora sinensis* was still nebulous despite the stylistic modifications distinguishing this image from the Vatican drawing. In fact, *Sum Xu* was not even included in the French translation of Boym's treatise, which appeared twice in 1664 in the second volume of *Relations de divers voyages curieux*.[597] Edited by the prominent savant and collector Melchisédech Thévenot (c. 1622–92), this was the most comprehensive collection of travel accounts in French before the eighteenth century.[598] Subsequent reprints followed in 1672, 1696 and 1730 also without inclusion of the print of the *Sum Xu*.[599] In comparison with the other accounts of exotic travels in Thevenot's volume, the translation of *Flora sinensis* is relatively well illustrated. The absence of the *Sum Xu* among the illustrations of plants and birds possibly indicates its failure to signify, and effectively the inability to represent it (even in recycled form) on the part of Thevenot's printmaker. Even the 'green-winged turtle' (Fig. 5.11) was depicted in the French edition (albeit in altered form), possibly because of its less complicated epistemological status. As it looked turtle-like, and was so described in the *Flora sinensis*, the accommodation of this terrapin to the needs of Thevenot's publication did not present

[596] For the discussion of pictorial curiosity, see Christopher S. Wood, 'Curious Pictures and the Art of Description', *Word & Image* 11, no. 4 (1995): 332–52.

[597] Szczesniak, 'The Writings of Michael Boym', 491–94.

[598] For a critical review of Thévenot's work, see Nicholas Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 81–130.

[599] This proliferation of the editions of the *Flora Sinensis* in France is not surprising. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Jesuits began shifting their allegiance to the French court, as French monarchs were more tolerant of the Jesuit policy of accommodation, and also because it was part of their policy of independence from Rome. The Jesuits received funding from the French government, and could freely publish their books in Paris. This turned Paris into a centre of the dissemination of the knowledge on China. See Ho-fung Hung, 'Orientalist Knowledge and Social Theories: China and the European Conceptions of East-West Differences from 1600 to 1900', *Sociological Theory* 21, no. 2 (September 2003): 257–58; Mungello, *Curious Land*, 25.

difficulties. The omission of the *Sum Xu* perhaps suggests that it conveyed ambiguous visual information, which could not be transmitted to this new volume.

Replicating the *Sum Xu*

Boym's *Sum Xu* was not completely disregarded by European naturalists, however. In fact, it re-appeared in a seminal contemporaneous publication. Eleven years after the issue of the *Flora sinensis*, Athanasius Kircher, the illustrious Jesuit polyhistor, published his illustrated volume on China titled *China illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667).[600] Although the *China illustrata* re-used many illustrations from Boym's volume, it did not adopt its idiosyncratic visual idiom.[601] The animal (Fig. 5.12), although referred in the text as *Sumxu*, is now called *Feki*. It is represented in a three-quarter view—its head and front right paw dipped slightly into the front-left foreground to give a diagonal impression. Moreover, the *Feki* is integrated within a three-dimensional space—a foreground and a background can be now observed. This effect would have potentially added to the credibility of representation, in particular addressing the concern held by people like Martini that the Chinese 'did not understand how to represent the shade'.

What Kircher has to say about the animal that he still calls *Sumxu* in the text is mainly copied from Boym's *Flora sinensis*:

[600] The *China illustrata* was first published in Latin. It appeared in 1667 published by two presses: that of Jacobus van Meurs, and by Johannes Janssonius. There are no substantial differences between the two versions. See Baleslaw Szczesniak, 'Athanasius Kircher's China Illustrata', *Osiris* 10 (1952): 388. Van Meurs pirated Janssonius. This prompted a legal confrontation. Van Meurs promised not to print more copies, but only in exchange for a tidy sum. See Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, 67–68.

[601] It is unclear whether Kircher used the lost manuscript for the *Flora Sinensis*, or whether the model was the volume published in Vienna.

> There is also a domestic animal called the Sumxu, which is similar to a cat. It is black and saffron coloured and has splendid hair. The Chinese tame it and put a silver collar around its neck. It is an avid hunter of mice. It is so rare that one sells from seven to nine scudi.[602]

Kircher thus adds an important modification to Boym's description: his *Sumxu* is considered similar to the cat. This addendum is telling as it suggests that the author himself had problems comprehending the nature of Boym's representation. In attempting to elucidate the nature of the *Sum Xu*, Kircher resorts to a common trick among early modern naturalists—he uses comparison in order to help the reader (and himself) imagine the *Sumxu* by analogy with a local specimen.[603] Similar affinity based on appearance and hunting habits was drawn between cats and civets (an association still discernible in the English term 'civet cat').[604]

But it was not only similar physical traits and behaviour that prompted the assignment of feline attributes to the *Sumxu*. For instance, ferrets were also used in Europe as mice hunters,[605] but were not considered to be cats. Crucially in this context, it was the intertextual mediation between Boym's information and the intelligence provided by other Jesuits that instigated Kircher's thinking. Kircher was one of the most informed men in Europe to take advantage of the growing knowledge of Chinese fauna, with the Jesuits having *de facto* a monopoly on the dissemination of information about this land.[606] Kircher's library included all of the important

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[602] Translation after Athanasius Kircher, *China Illustrata*, trans. Charles D. Van Tuyl (Muskogee, OK: Indian University Press, 1987), 186.

[603] Cooper, *Inventing the Indigenous*, 89. A similar process takes place today when Western philosophers attempt to translate the concepts of other societies into the conceptual language of the West. See Florike Egmond and Peter Mason, *The Mammoth and the Mouse: Microhistory and Morphology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 72–79.

[604] See, for example, Edward Topsell, *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents* (London, 1658), 228–230.

[605] Erika Matulich, 'Ferret Domesticity: A Primer', *Ferrets USA* 5 (2000), http://www.cypresskeep.com/Ferretfiles/Domestic-FUSA.htm.

[606] Paula Findlen, 'Scientific Spectacle in Baroque Rome: Athanasius Kircher and the Roman College Museum', in *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, ed. Mordechai Feingold (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 268–269;

European books referencing the natural life of the Middle Kingdom: apart from Boym's *Flora sinensis*, Kircher owned Daniello Bartoli's *La Cina* (Rome, 1663), Álvaro Semedo's *Imperio de la China* (1642), and most importantly Martini's *Novus atlas sinensis* (Amsterdam, 1655). Furthermore, he exchanged information orally with Filippo Marino, Procurator of Japan, and Johann Grueber (1623–1680), mathematician at the Beijing court, upon their return from east Asia.[607] Not being able to find any information about the Sum Xu, Kircher likely used Martini's description of an animal that seemed most akin to Boym's enigmatic creature: the mice-hunting cat. Martini gives an account of this animal as the counterpoint to the lop-eared cat from the Beijing province, which is too delicate to hunt:

> [Cats that are held in high esteem] In this province there are cats white all-over, who have long fur, and floppy ears. They are esteemed as highly as the little dogs of Malta, and the Chinese ladies love them dearly. These cats are not good mousers, perhaps because these ladies nourish them too delicately. The Chinese do not lack however in those cats that hunt mice well, although they are not treated as preciously; maybe this [lack of pampering] makes them better [hunters] than the others.[608]

The value of this short passage for Kircher's interpretation of the *Sumxu* lies in the provision of a Chinese analogy for the specimen, which Boym remains enigmatic about. In the face of Martini's silence about the *Sum Xu*, and Boym's economical description of this species, Kircher focused on the only aspect he could make sense of: the *Sum Xu*'s ability to hunt mice. Although

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Antonella Romano, 'La prima storia della Cina: Juan Gonzales de Mendoza fra l'Impero spagnolo e Roma', *Quaderni Storici* 48, no. 1 (2013): 89–116.

[607] He references them in the *China illustrata*. See the English trans. of Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 172, 173, 174, 175, 182, 184, 185, 186, 189, 190, 194. See also Mungello, *Curious Land*, 138–43.

[608] 'Chats dont on fait beaucoup d'état. Dans cette Province il y a des chats tous blancs, qui ont le poil long, les oreilles pendantes, qu'on estime comme ces petits chiens de Malte, & que les Dames aiment extrement : mais ils ne prenent point de souris, à cause, peut estre, que ces Dames les nourrissent trop delicatement : ils n'en manque pas pourtant du ceux qui chassent fort bien aux souris, bien qu'on ne les mignarde pas tant; ce qui les rend peut estre meilleurs que les autres.' Martini, *Atlas Novus Sinensis*, 36.

Boym does not mention the *Sum Xu's* similarity to the cat, Kircher arrived at this comparison by means of analogy. Kircher's *Sumxu* thus appears to have been a notional shorthand, and the conflation of Boym's and Martini's representations—one of the Chinese cats that 'hunt mice well'.

In the face of early modern natural history being based on collective observation and description, Kircher confronted a problem. He had no specimen in his Roman College museum, and there was no other illustration of the *Sum Xu* he could use for comparison. Like other naturalists, he was aware of the possibility of miscommunication and misidentification, but given that Boym's *Sum Xu* was the first and only representation of this animal, Kircher could not rely on multiple accounts. There was no other referent to which he could refer for additional information. Although the documentary value of Boym's imagery rested on its self-reported connection with the observed world,[609] such causality could not be secured. No reports and representations yielded absolute certainty without comparison with actual known specimens.[610] Kircher needed to elucidate Boym's illustration and text, and Martini's text provided just such an avenue. Yet Martini's text could act as a prompt only to the extent that Boym's *Sum Xu* itself allowed for it. In this case, visual and textual forms were independent of their meaning. Henri Focillon was right to pinpoint the power of form to unexpectedly renew itself in the face of lack of meaning, even if the form's content has been undecipherable for a long time.[611] Form is not inseparable from content: meaning can be created *ad hoc*, and it does not need a sequential tradition of signification.

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[609] This was a common trope in natural history, See Claudia Swan and Carmen Niekrasz, 'Art', in *The Cambridge History of Science*, ed. Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 795.

[610] Findlen, 'Natural History', 446.

[611] Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, 38, 137.

As a malleable construct, the exotic was always up for reinvention and renegotiation. The vague textual commentary, the use of exotic script, and reliance on the idiosyncratic style of visual representation marked the *Sum Xu* as illegible. Not conforming to European conventions of naturalist imagery, Boym's representation posed more questions than it gave answers. In order to make the strange creature intelligible, Kircher first needed to understand for himself what the *Sumxu* was. Translating Boym's illustration into a new image—one which supposedly gave the *Sum Xu* more credibility—was an attempt to elucidate the mystery of the animal's nature. Given the visual resemblance, the image in the *China illustrata* was most likely commissioned from an artist familiar with Boym's image. Yet the illustration in Kircher's volume is very different. Although the body of the animal now called *Feki* is based on Boym's type, the anonymous engraver gives us the scale, which makes the animal considerably larger than in Boym's engraving. If it stood up on its hind legs, it would be almost as tall as the two Chinese men who tame it. This visual appearance effectively departs from the textual descriptions, which marks the *Sum Xu* as similar to the cat. Did Kircher mean to imply that Chinese cats were this large? This is unlikely.

The engraving provides some clues on how to answer this question. There is another *Feki* sitting by the wall; and a further four specimens are represented hunting a deer, presumably in an attempt to indicate the behaviour of this animal. The depiction of four additional *Feki*s hunting a stag in the background scene visible through an aperture in the room, implies uncertainty as to what Boym's *Sumxu* was meant to be. Thus, against the text itself, the *Feki*/*Sumxu* was turned from a hunter of mice into the hunter of deer. Such disjunction between text and image in the *China illustrata* suggests that Kircher struggled with making sense of Boym's *Sum Xu*. Amidst this confusion, a question comes to mind: Does Kircher even represent the same species?

Indeed, the caption does not apply the familiar word *Sum Xu* but a new one, *Feki*. This substitution seems to be an invention with no apparent source. This is not a correction of Boym's Romanisation of the Chinese script. Although Boym's Chinese handwriting was clumsy, it was readable.[612] So was his Romanisation, as it was kept within the system of Portuguese-inflected transliteration, widely used among the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries.[613] The engraver, on the other hand, probably knew no Chinese at all, as the Chinese characters appear merely as a curious and inaccurate mangling of the characters drawn by Boym. Tellingly, Kircher does not discuss the *Feki* anywhere in the text of the *China illustrata*. Nor is the illustration of the *Feki* on the same page as the discussion of the *Sumxu*. However, on the very same page there is a description, which perhaps mirrors at least one of the specimens in the engraving. These are apes, some of which 'have tails like dogs or cats':

> There are also in China several types of man-like apes. Some have no tails, but others have tails like dogs or cats. They are very docile and except for the foulness of their bottoms, you would scarcely believe they were animals.[614]

Kircher continues his description, citing the oral account the Jesuit missionary to India, Henry Roth, who asserts that the right training can make an animal behave like a man.[615] In Kircher's paraphrasing, Roth gives the example of an ape so well trained that it could drive a carriage pulled by two horses using reins and a whip. The ape's control over the coach was so complete that the animal seemed to have almost transformed into a human. Since the engraving of the *Feki*s in the foreground depicts one of these animals being trained, we may presume that

[612] Walravens, 'Flora Sinensis Revisited', 344.

[613] Mungello, *Curious Land*, 171.

[614] English trans. after Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 186.

[615] In Ibid.

this image provides a visual commentary on the text introducing China's mysterious apes. A crossbreed between the cat, the dog and the man, as elucidated by Kircher, these apes would have been difficult to represent. As if to illustrate this point, the animal sitting in the background—although more simian in appearance and behaviour than the *Feki* in the foreground—has its snout concealed by the sleeve of one of the men. As the effect of such facial expunction, the viewer might begin to wonder whether they saw the same animal in diverse poses performing different actions. Perhaps only the animal sitting in the background is the *Feki* and all the others are *Sumxus*? This inference, however, does not correspond with the morphology of the creature in the background, which seemingly has the same body as the other animals in the print.

Although all six animals in the print perceivably depict the same species, the visual precedents for these different variants of one animal diverge. The animal in the foreground was clearly copied from Boym's *Flora sinensis*, but the remaining specimens derived from other images deemed suitable by van Meurs's engraver, and supposedly in sync with Kircher's specification. One possible visual prototype for the *Feki* sitting by the wall is a simian character in the centre of the image (Fig. 5.13) in Johan Nieuhof's *An embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces*, published in the same workshop two years earlier. A direct literary prototype for the *Feki* does not exist to my knowledge: most importantly, Martini spoke of no such animal. Why then include such a vague illustration in a volume whose ambition was to elucidate the *naturalia* of China? One credible answer is that Kircher was not sure what exact species the *Feki* stood for. What becomes evident in this process of mistranslation is that form took on its own life, despite Kircher's efforts to tame it. While attempting to preserve the identity of Boym's animal, he ultimately created an avatar that only claimed an authentic connection to a

virtual, invented point of origin.

The transition from Boym's *Sum Xu* to Kircher's *Feki* offers a useful glimpse into the treatment of idiosyncratic visual conventions in the printing centres of Europe. Given its visual exoticism, Boym's *Sum Xu* became a dislocated medium of cultural otherness that needed to be notionally re-accommodated by the European printmaker in order to be understood. The Europeanisation of the *Sum Xu* in Kircher's volume, however, resulted in a representation that was equally evasive in terms of signification. The resulting image evoked strangeness and exoticism, instead of, as intended, clearly mediating the physical properties of the specimens discussed in the text. This failed domestication begs the question of the power of one image to give rise to another. The *Feki* did not induce a semantically legible meaning, but, despite this failure, it did engender other images. The subsequent incarnations of Boym's and Kircher's images make clear that the transmission of visual form was in many cases tacit, and even overlooked. Moreover, form often changed beyond recognition. It is to these instances of formal diversion that we now turn.

Afterlives of the *Sum Xu*

Kircher's *China illustrata* circulated widely across Europe. Even today, the search database WorldCat lists extant copies of this work in 168 libraries. To this substantial number, we must add the Dutch (1668), English (1669), and French (1670) translations.[616] The English translation by John Ogilby (1600–1676), the Scottish cartographer, translator and book printer based in

[616] Szczesniak, 'Athanasius Kircher's', 388–89; Florence Hsia, 'Athanasius Kircher's China Illustrata (1667): An Apologia Pro Vita Sua', in *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, 2004), 397.

London, warrants special consideration due to its difference from the other editions.[617] As opposed to the Latin, French, and Dutch impressions of the *China illustrata*, which were all published in Amsterdam by either Jacobus van Meurs or Johannes Janssonius, Ogilby's much-abridged version of Kircher's volume was printed by John Macock in London, without the use of original plates. In fact, the English translation of the *China illustrata* was not an independent volume: it appeared as a separately paginated appendix ('Special remarks taken at large out of Athanasius Kircher') to Ogilby's edition of Johan Nieuhof's *Embassy from the East-India Company*, originally published in Amsterdam in 1665.[618] Although a new plate was made for the English translation, it is possible that van Meurs oversaw the production. The Amsterdam printer often shipped plates and even engraved pages to his less equipped London partner.[619]

Important for this study, Ogilby's translation includes an altered engraving of the *Feki* (Fig. 5.14), which is only one of the three plates of animals taken from Kircher's volume. The modified image is thought to have been engraved by Wencleslaus Hollar,[620] who used artistic licence to make the illustration appear more informative. Hollar began by removing the Chinese characters, which he must have deemed irrelevant. Having effaced the abstruse script, he re-organised the entire composition to further aid the viewer in comprehending the representation. The most significant adjustment is the stretching of the view, which effectively allowed the engraver to depict all six *Fekis* independently from other figures. The animal sitting in the background can now be seen in full, its face unobscured. Moreover, all the figures have been

[617] For more details on Ogilby's translation, see Katherine S. Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1976), 96–98.

[618] Dawn Odell, 'The Soul of Transactions: Illustration and Johan Nieuhof's Travels to China', *De Seventiende Eeuw* 12, no. 3 (2001): 226.

[619] Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, 65.

[620] Richard Pennington, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Wenceslaus Hollar 1607-1677* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 329.

modified for style, including the *Feki* in the foreground whose snout has been rendered more angular. The animal in the background has changed the most drastically, though. Whereas in Kircher's print could still pass for *Feki* in a different pose, it now looks like a different species altogether. It lacks a tail, and its face appears simian. Presumably, Kircher's image appeared epistemologically empty to Hollar, and the artist attempted to elucidate it by referring to the English text.

Indeed, it was not just Hollar who appears to have had difficulties apprehending the visual representation of the *Feki* in Kircher's engraving. Ogilby, Kircher's translator, also found the image of the *Feki* in the *China illustrata* confusing to the extent that he was not even sure what animal this image referred to. Stemming from this ambiguity, Ogilby—in the editorial process of abridging Kircher's *China illustrata*—decided to omit the passages about the *Sumxu* altogether in the main body of text. The inclusion of the *Feki* plate in the English edition is probably due to its visual and naturalist appeal. Strangely, however, it was included in the section on plants, rather than animals. Ogilby most likely did not have access to Boym's treatise, which would have clarified the case for him, as Boym clearly marks his image with the linguistic signifier *Sum Xu*. However, relying only on Kircher's *China illustrata*, Ogilby had no means to establish the connection between the visual signifier representing the furry animal denoted as *Feki*, and the linguistic description *Sumxu* in Kircher's volume. As a result, Ogilby eliminated the ambiguity by removing the textual description whose point of reference he did not understand, and therefore deemed unnecessary. All in all, Kircher's visual domestication of Boym's *Sum Xu* did not resolve the epistemological emptiness of the image.

If anything, Kircher's forging of the *Feki* led to even more ambiguity and confusion for the readers, including Ogilby who could not recognise a *Sumxu* in the image of the *Feki*. Ogilby,

it seems, took to heart Kircher's allusions to the simian nature of the *Feki*. This inference is supported by the fact that Ogilby (or Hollar, or Macock) provides a caption underneath the *Feki* plate, which signals that it illustrates the text on page ninety-one—'Feki: Foli 91 Kerker'. Moving to the designated section, one reads a number of anecdotes about China's apes. Ogilby recounts after Kircher:

> The Province of *Fokien* hath an animal perfectly resembling man, but longer arms, and all over hairy, called *Fefe*, most swift and greedy after humane flesh, which that he may be better make his prey, he feigneth a laughter, and suddenly while the person stands listning, feiseth. There are also in *China* Apes and Baboons of a different kind, whereof some imitate Men, others Dogs and Cats, and are also tractable and docile to admiration of which the Father *Roths* relation, he being an eye-witness.[621]

The reference to the docility of these apes suggests why Ogilby might have conflated them with the image of the *Feki* in training. The resemblance of some of these apes with dogs and cats further explains the scene of hunting taking place in the woods. Moreover, the ubiquity of the descriptions of apes suggests that Ogilby understood Kircher's *Feki* in simian terms. Especially the overtly ape-like character of the *Feki* in the background might be explained by the ubiquity of the textual and visual representations of apes, both in Kircher's volume, and Ogilby's translation.

Adding to the simian reading of the *Feki*, in the earlier section of the volume—comprising *An embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces*[622]—Ogilby,

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[621] Athanasius Kircher, *Special Remarks Taken at Large out of Athanasius Kircher: His Antiquities of China*, trans. John Ogilby (London, 1669), 91.

[622] This geographic information mostly comes from Martino Martini's *Atlas*, although the description of the Dutch embassy to the Manchu court (1655–57) was taken from first hand-observation. See Edwin J. Van Kley, 'News from China; Seventeenth-Century European Notices of the Manchu Conquest', *The Journal of Modern History* 45, no. 4 (December 1973): 568.

translating Johan Nieuhof, also refers to China's apes. He begins by corrupting the signifier *Feki* into 'Fefe':

> In the Kingdom of *Gannan* is a certain Creature called *Fefe*, which in his shape comes very near to a man, having long arms: he is black and hairy upon the body, swift of foot, and laughs aloud as a man, but is of so voracious nature, that if he can meet with him, he will instantly murder and devour him. … In the Province of *Suchu* lyes a Mountain called *Toyung*, upon which are Monkies or Baboons, which for bigness and shape are very much like a man. These Creatures are more than ordinarily addicted to Venery, so that they often attempt to surprise Women on purpose to satisfie their bestial lust, and have their wills on them.[623]

A comparison of the English translation of Nieuhof's volume with the original Dutch and French versions (both published by or for Jacob de Meurs in 1655, the first in Amsterdam, the latter in Leiden) supplies further evidence for the simian reading of the *Feki* by both Ogilby and Hollar.[624] The original versions published by de Meurs provide an intriguing image (fig. 5.13), which was not included in the English edition. Compressing a number of animals together for the sake of visual conciseness, de Meurs' image represents—among other figures—two simian types. No representation here stems from the *Sum Xu*/*Feki* type, given that Nieuhof's work was published two years before Kircher's volume. As suggested above, it was Nieuhof's simian character in the centre of the image, which was likely used as the visual prototype for the image of the *Feki* sitting by the wall in the *China illustrata*. Ogilby—who published his book in the aftermath of the success of Kircher's and Nieuhof's works—took the chance to kill two birds with one stone, and printed both seminal texts on China as one publication. Although he doubled

[623] Johannes Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China*, trans. John Ogilby (London, 1669), 269.

[624] See Johannes Nieuhof, *Gezantschap Der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie Aan Den Grooten Tartarischen Cham ...* (Amsterdam, 1665); Johannes Nieuhof, *L'ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'empereur de la Chine, ou Grand Cam de Tartarie ...* (Leiden, 1665).

up some information, he sometimes decided to remove duplications. For example, the plate comprising the two simian types is missing from the English translation. Perhaps Ogilby assumed that it was unnecessary to replicate this image because he had already provided an image of the *Feki*? Whatever the reason, we can easily see that Kircher's image of the *Feki* (originating from Boym's *Sum Xu*) triggered a set of different simian readings and representations. Effectively, the floating descriptions and signifiers resulted in often-inconsistent interpretations.

Another example of such epistemological disarrangement is Nieuhof's description of the 'mouse' whose appearance uncannily resembles that of Boym's *Sum Xu*: 'Near *Siven* are yellow Mice, very large, whose skins are in much request amongst the people.'[625] Given that Nieuhof most likely referred to an animal from the *shu* (mouse) family—the sable (*diaoshu*), or the weasel (*youshu*)—he may have well indicated the same species that Boym originally pointed to. Without knowing Chinese, Nieuhof would not have been able, however, to make this connection.[626]

Images in naturalist compendia were intended to make exotic species more accessible for the reader. But as we have seen in the case of the *Sum Xu*/*Feki*, these illustrations could bewilder instead of clarify. The *Atlas chinensis* (Amsterdam, 1670),[627] written by the Dutch physician and

[625] In Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company*, 233.

[626] Kircher could converse in person with his fellow Jesuit Martini, but only in years 1655-58, when Martini was in Rome. Two other missionary authors on China, Johannes Greuber and Henry Roth, were in Rome in 1664. Findlen, 'Scientific Spectacle in Baroque Rome: Athanasius Kircher and the Roman College Museum', 269; Trent Pomplun, *Jesuit on the Roof of the World: Ippolito Desideri's Mission to Tibet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 53–54; Cornelius Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603–1721* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1924), 200.

[627] Olfert Dapper, *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische maetschappye …* (Amsterdam, 1670). The work was translated by John Ogilby as *Atlas Chinensis: Being a second part of a relation of remarkable passages in two embassies from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the vice-roy Singlamong and general Taising Lipovi, and to Konchi, emperor of China and East Tartary* (London, 1671)

writer Olfert Dapper (1636–1689), came up with way of bypassing this conundrum. Although published by Jacob van Meurs (like Kircher's and Nieuhof's volumes), Dapper's account, which includes descriptions of Chinese animals, does not replicate the illustrations available in the previous works. This freed the author (who had never left the Netherlands) to paraphrase Martini's, Kircher's and Nieuhof's passages about the *Sumxu* (which he calls 'Xumxu'), the Beijing cat, and the *Fefe*,[628] without the difficulty of matching them with any image. Dapper's clear distinction between these three animals did not prevent subsequent authors from conflating them, however. Indeed, various interpretative trajectories were always possible. Observations of the anthropologist Nicholas Thomas resonates with this set of images: '[they] are not what they were made to be but what they have become'.[629] We will better understand the uncontrolled nature of the *Sum Xu*'s circulation if we consider yet another set of re-incarnations of this animal.

Alternative Afterlives

The disjunction of text and image in Boym's original *Sum Xu* continued to generate new representations. Certain triggers enabled unexpected mutations of this image as we have seen with the simian strand of interpretation. Another prompt that was taken up by subsequent interpretations was Kircher's commentary on the feline nature of the *Sumxu*. Kircher's domestication of the visual morphology of this unknown animal, and the corresponding verbal description, appears to have been so suggestive that the French natural historian Comte de Buffon (Georges Louis Leclerc, 1707–1788), writing over a century later, suggests that the *Sumxu* could in fact be the Chinese lop-eared cat reported by many European natural historians

[628] Dapper, *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf*, 230–231.

[629] Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 4.

(beginning with Martini).[630] He passes the following judgment in the supplement section on the cat:

> We have said (volume six, page fourteen) that there were lop-eared cats in China; this variety is found nowhere else. Perhaps it is a different species altogether because travellers speak of an animal called Sumxu, which is domesticated in China. [These travellers] say that [the Sumxu] can be best compared with the cat with whom it has much in common. It is black or yellow in colour, and its fur is extremely shiny. The Chinese put silver collars on these animals' neck to tame them. As they are not common, they sell at a high price, both because of their beauty and because they make the most cruel war against rats.[631]

Notably, in the index Bouffon is less explicit, only asserting a similarity between the *Sumxu* and the Chinese lop-eared cat, rather than suggesting their common identity:

> Sumxu is a pretty animal, indigenous to China, that can be best compared with the cat.[632]

Buffon's suggestion, however, later became a 'fact'. In 1820, French zoologist Anselme Gaëtan Desmarest (1784–1838) states in *Mammalogie ou description des espèces de mammifères* that the lop-eared cat of Beijing and the '*sumxu*' are in fact the same species. Listing the variety of cat breeds around the world, Desmarest includes the *sumxu*:

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[630] Buffon's source was abbf Prevon (written in French), whose source was John Green (written in English), whose source was French Jesuit de Halde (written in French), whose source was Martini's 1655 work.

[631] 'Nous avons dit (volume VI, page 14) qu'il y avoit à la Chine des chats à oreilles pendantes; cette variété ne se trouve nulle part ailleurs, et fait peut-être une espèce différente de celle du chat, car les Voyageurs parlant d'un animal appelé Sumxu, qui est tout-à-fait domestique à la Chine, disent qu'on ne peut mieux le comparer qu'au chat avec lequel il a beaucoup de rapport. Sa couleur est noire ou jaune, et son poil extrêmement luisant. Les Chinois mettent à ces animaux des colliers d'argent au cou, et les rendent extrêmement familiers. Comme ils ne sont pas communs, on les achette fort cher, tant à cause de leur beauté, que parce qu'ils font aux rats la plus cruelle guerre.' In leclerc, comte de buffon, 'addition à l'article du chat', in *histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, Supplement 3, 1776, 116.

[632] 'Sumxu (le) est un joli animal, domestique à la Chine, qu'on ne peut mieux comparer qu'au chat.' In Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 'Table des Matières', in *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, vol. 32, Supplement 3, 1776, xx.

> The second is the lop-eared cat, of fine and long hair, black or yellow, domesticated in China, [especially] in the province of Pe-chi-ly, known as the *sumxu*.[633]

Notably, the author combines the descriptions devised by Boym and Kircher: the animal's docility and its coat of lustrous fur (although the hair is longer than Boym and Kircher would have it); with Martini's description of the Beijing cat: its location in the Northern Zhili province (encompassing Beijing), fur length, and hanging ears. Desmarest takes this conflation for granted as the description of an actually existing species. Had he seen the image in Kircher, he most likely would not have recognised it as the illustration of the *sumxu* he had in mind. As late as 1856, the aristocratic cat lover Lady Mary Anne Cust (1800–1882) emphasises the close affinity of the cat and what she calls the 'Samxces' in her book *The Cat*:

> [I]n the province of Pe-chily, in China, there are cats with long hair and drooping ears, which are in great favour with the Chinese ladies; others say this is not a cat but an animal called 'Samxces'.[634]

It is unlikely that Lady Cust knew that this perplexing breed of cat was in fact Kircher's conflation of Martini's and Boym's short notes about different species, which were interpreted in unexpected ways by the subsequent readers of Kircher's *China Illustrata*. Lady Cust most likely absorbed the information on the animal that she herself calls 'Samxces' through her reading of the Comte de Buffon or one of his numerous acolytes. She imagined this animal through the

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[633] 'La 2e. est le *chat d'oreilles pendantes*, à poil fin et long, noir ou jaune, en domesticité à la Chine, dans la province de Pe-chi-ly, sous le nom de *sumxu*.' In Anselme Gaëtan Desmarest, *Mammalogie ou description des espèces de mammifères*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1820), 233 n.2.

[634] Mary Anne Cust, *The Cat: Its History and Diseases* (London, 1856), unpaginated. Second edition, Mary Anne Cust, *The Cat: Its History and Diseases* (London, 1870), 19–20. Lady Cust is, however, suspicious of the pendulent ears of this species, as she adds: 'I am doubtful the ears of cats or any of the feline race ever would fall, as their hearing would then be less acute and not so well suited to their habits of life.' The book was reviewed in the cat lovers' magazine *Cat Gossip*, quoting verbatim the entire section about the *Samxces*. See *Cat Gossip* 1, no. 17 (30 March 1927): 3.

process that art historian Craig Clunas has called 'iconic circuit'.[635] An economy of representations in which images circulate between media, the 'iconic circuit' describes ways in which visual, verbal and textual referents affect one another, without assuming the priority of any one referent.

It was only following the outcome of the Second Opium War (1856–1860) that China was forced to open its borders to foreigners. This new political situation put an end to the Sum Xu's residual presence in European imaginations. One of the scholars who undertook the task of searching for the lop-eared cat was the zoologist (and Catholic priest) Armand David (1826–1900). Having visited many areas, he eventually admitted to the failure of his pursuit. In 1889, he wrote a report on China's wild and domestic cats, in which he concluded that no Sum Xu was to be found:

> We have never encountered the breed [of cats] with floppy ears of which so much was said some time ago.[636]

It is only around this time that the myth began to wane. In 1926, the editor of the magazine *Cat Gossip*, H. C. Brooke, wrote a column lamenting that even though for 'donkeys years' European cat shows had been offering prizes for the Droop-Eared Chinese Cat, the mysterious breed had failed to materialise.[637] Four months later, Brooke appeared more adamant that the species was mythical.

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[635] Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 46. Clunas borrows the term from Carlo Ginzburg, 'Titian, Ovid and Sixteenth-Century Codes for Erotic Illustration', in *Myths, Emblems, Clues* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990), 79.

[636] 'Jamais nous n'avons rencontré la race à oreilles tombantes dont on a parlé beaucoup, il y a quelque temps.' In Armand David, 'Faune et flore chinoises: Classe des mammifères, ordre des carnassiers', *Les missions catholiques* 21, no. 1040 (10 May 1889): 227.

[637] 'And, of course, for "donkeys years" Continental Shows have offered prizes for the mythical [?] Drop-eared Chinese Cat, which invariably fails to materialize; though one is always meeting someone who knows someone

> The mystery of the Chinese Drop-eared cats will, we fear, never be solved. We are beginning to think that the Chinese gentleman whom we met once and who assured us, 'With a smile that was childlike bland', that he knew them well, was indulging in 'terminological inexactitudes'. … On the face of it, a cat with hanging ears seems most unlikely.[638]

This was one of the last episodes in the chain of discursive authentications that fuelled the *Sum Xu*'s continual existence.

Even today, however, some cat enthusiasts believe that the *Sumxu* is an actual species. For example, cat amateur Nancy Robbins in a recent self-published book asserts that the *Sumxu* did exist in the past, but is now extinct.

> The Sumxu, Chinese Lop-Eared Cat, Drop-eared cat, Droop-eared cat, or Hanging-Ear Cat, all names referring to its characteristic feature of pendulous ears, was a long-haired lop-eared breed of cat now considered extinct. … An engraving from Athanasius Kircher's *book China Monumentis, Qua Sacris qua Profanis* (1666) describes the Sumxu as cat-like, but the illustration resembled a small bear with a bushy tail. The engraving was probably based on verbal descriptions of sketches since other writers refer to the creature as a droop-eared cat.[639]

Despite the factual mistakes Robbins makes, her account is germane, for it shows the enduring life of the myth, which originated from the misreading of ambiguous images and multivocal texts. Beginning its life as a cluster of floating signifiers, this myth, it seems, has never been fully dispelled.

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whose friends has often seen them.' In H. C. Brooke, 'Gossip of the Week', *Cat Gossip* 1, no. 4 (29 December 1926): 2.

[638] H. C. Brooke, 'Gossip of the Week', *Cat Gossip* 1, no. 18 (6 April 1927): 2–3.

[639] Nancy Robbins, *Domestic Cats: Their History, Breeds and Other Facts* (self-published, 2012), 265–266.

Conclusion: Mixed Origins

The *Sum Xu* escaped meaning, but nonetheless repeatedly provoked and determined the ways in which it was understood. For a species that did not exist beyond the domain of representation, it was the image's appearance that bound it with the lifeworld of the beholder—the horizon of experience on which things appear as meaningful.[640] Visual and textual description—as the virtual manifestation of the *Sum Xu*'s physicality—was what made beholders and readers believe in the existence of this species in the physical world. The animal was ambiguous—no doubt—but that is why naturalists and beholders keep resuscitating it—they need to make sense of it, to give content to an empty form. Although the *Sum Xu* was not a real species, it in fact behaved like one—following through its own autonomous evolutionary processes that pushed it towards an increasingly greater complexity of form and function.[641] Importantly, this process was dependent on the potential of the *Sum Xu* image to activate cultural memories and associations. In the scheme of resonances evoked by ambiguous imagery, the unfolding of the *Sum Xu*'s transmission had less to do with authorship, and more with the potentialities inherent in form itself.

Since authorship is built on previous relays of form, what should we make of Boym's role in the creation of the *Sum Xu* image? Should Boym's *Flora sinensis* be merely considered, as by many historians of Boym,[642] as an important step in spreading knowledge of Chinese fauna in Europe? Such assumptions about the cultural momentousness of Boym's representations

[640] For the concept of lifeworld, see Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 108–142.

[641] See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 'Why We Need Things', in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1993), 20–29.

[642] Wasilewska-Dobkowska, *Pióropusze i turbany*, 167; Kajdański, *Michała Boyma opisanie świata*; Szczesniak, 'The Writings of Michael Boym'.

would not tell the entire story, for—as we have seen in the case of the *Sum Xu*—some of the images can be epistemologically empty. Even after Kircher's transformation of the *Sum Xu* into the *Feki*, the resulting representation (both visual and textual) was perplexing. This makes the *Sum Xu*'s appearance and its subsequent metamorphoses problematic. Admittedly, Boym's importation of a Chinese style flags an instance of cross-cultural intermediation, but one that signals the rejection of a foreign visual convention due to its inability to signify in new locales. It is precisely the contradictions and conflicts of the process of cultural domestication that enabled the shift from one image to another, effectively creating opportunities for new images to emerge. The immunity to complete disappearance is the real testimony to the strength of the *Sum Xu* as an image.

The *Sum Xu*, which originated in the context of a remote visual culture, and then changed beyond recognition when taken up in Europe, presents an intriguing case. Although for many images, the trajectory of cross-cultural exchange can be traced with some degree of plausibility, the transmission of the *Sum Xu* from one form to another was often indirect, thus blurring the relationship between the precedent and subsequent incarnations of this fictional animal. While the publication of the *Flora sinensis* in Vienna may be seen as a transmission of an image from one culture to another, the stylistic infrastructure of this volume was not copied in any other naturalist text of the period. The *Sum Xu* begot the *Feki*, which in turn generated new visual forms, some of them entirely different. The earlier shift eradicated the stylistic exotic without actually imbuing it with meaning; the latter reincarnations of the *Sum Xu* killed the preceding visual form altogether for it to reappear unexpectedly in unrecognizable shapes and in different media. No obvious sequence or structural similarity can be detected between the successive texts and images, and their antecedents are now lost in translation. Influence—the traditional category

to analyse transmission of form and iconography—bears no relevance here,[643] as the illustrations of the small furry animal with a bushy tail in *Master Gu's Manual of Painting*, the *Flora sinensis*, and the *China illustrata* do not even represent the same species. As Henri Focillon asserted in *The Life of Forms in Art*, 'form liberates other forms according to its *own* laws.'[644]

As an image that progressed incrementally from one incarnation to another through a series of replications in different styles and media, the *Sum Xu* offers support for Focillon's assertion. Though created in the 1650s, the *Sum Xu*'s had previous lives and undertook subsequent mutations, challenging the idea of a single creation. Attention to the uncertain origins and the unexpected afterlives of Michał Boym's *Sum Xu*—both as image and text—demonstrates an image's capacity for continual self-renewal and unexpected reappearances in new guises. The continuous life of the *Sum Xu* relied on various slippages and broken linkages, rather than a lineage of well-defined rectilinear formalist transfer. The origin of the *Sum Xu*, as well as its meaning and initial form, get lost in translation.

The mechanism of such broken transference of form is evocative in that it reveals how visual forms and their content may derive from many different sources, often simultaneously. The *Sum Xu*'s broken transference suggests that new forms are not bound to a linear path of sequentiality, but can intermittently re-appear in new media without the realisation of the preceding representation. Forms can stem from various slippages and misunderstandings. This implies that originality itself is a questionable concept. Artefacts lack a single locus of origin, and in fact often arrive from somewhere else, at least partially. To this end, Peter Mason has argued that once an image arrives from a far-away locale, it is likely to take on a life of its

[643] For potent critique of the idea of 'influence', see David Young Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 11–38.

[644] Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, 97.

own.[645] To suggest, as I have, that the migration of the *Sum Xu*'s form was multi-directional defies the rationale for securing the origin of an artistic form in a specific place and moment.

Often, it was the unacknowledged or unknown plural precedents of Boym's *Sum Xu* image that triggered multiple unforeseen mutations. Its plural pasts generated seemingly contradictory futures. The *Sum Xu* represents a Chinese, south-east Asian or Siberian specimen, whose form found a visual prototype in a late Ming manual of painting, which itself was based on a now lost painting that was two centuries older. From there, it was copied by a Polish-Lithuanian Jesuit, though possibly with a different species in mind. The resulting naturalist representation was then engraved by a European printmaker from a drawing delivered by Boym. Published in Vienna in 1656, the work was disseminated throughout Europe among naturalists and other interested parties. It is not possible to speak of originality of invention in this context. Despite its illegible visual form, the specimen was represented again in Kircher's seminal publication, though only in a drastically altered representational guise. Despite the new stylistically conventional depiction, Kircher's image did not manage to fix the *Sum Xu*'s meaning. Instead, the *Sum Xu* continued its erratic journey, moving between media and interpretations. The image gained afterlife after afterlife. Only the forced opening of China to the West in the aftermath of the Opium Wars put an end to this animal, which had never existed outside of the realm of representation. If the cross-cultural relay of the *Sum Xu*'s form resists being inserted into any given national historiography of art, and lends itself only to supranational and trans-cultural approaches, it is because of its continuous, tacit and haphazard circulation. Boym's *Sum Xu* invites us to embrace the instability and unpredictability of the image.

[645] See, for example, Peter Mason, *Before Disenchantment: Images of Exotic Animals and Plants in the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009); Mason, *Infelicities*.

Addressing the agency of Boym, the Sum Xu's alleged 'creator', poses another question that ultimately challenges the perception of singularity of creation. On the one hand, of course, the ethnicity of the author is incidental. Although a Pole, Boym was also a member of the Jesuit network and, as such, owed his loyalties to his superiors in Rome. In addition, during his travels to Europe in 1651–56, Boym acted as the envoy of the Yongli Emperor, the last ruler of the crumbling Ming Dynasty. If anything, Boym could be described—using Nathalie Rothman's phrase—as a 'trans-imperial subject' acting as an intermediary between cultures, rather than representing any bounded nation states.[646] There is nothing specifically Polish-Lithuanian about Boym's image of the *Sum Xu*—as, after all, it is an artistic hybrid between the visual idiom popular in Chinese printed compendia of knowledge and the European style of naturalist illustration.

Nonetheless, the partial Polish-Lithuanian agency—present in this artefact—is symptomatic of the circulation of images in early modern Europe writ large, as Boym's *Sum Xu* urges us to consider multifarious layers of cultural exchange. The work was published in Vienna, but it was taken up widely in subsequent publications in Paris, Amsterdam, London and beyond. Poland-Lithuania reverberates in the circulation of the *Sum Xu* only to the extent that Boym was a Pole. The ethnicity of the author of the volume in which the *Sum Xu* first appeared is only one of the cultural constituents that mark this image as a cross-cultural phenomenon. Posing the question 'what is Polish-Lithuanian about the *Sum Xu*', the answer is: 'very little'. But this very little *matters*. Martini did not discuss the *Sum Xu* in the *Atlas sinensis* (though he mentioned a 'yellow mouse', which might well denote the same species). Had it not been for Boym, Kircher would have not depicted this mysterious animal. In turn, had it not been for Kircher's attempt to

[646] Rothman, *Brokering Empire Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*, 3–15.

indigenise the *Sum Xu*, the lop-eared cat would have not been associated with this concocted animal. Multiple artists working in different places resuscitated the *Sum Xu* image, changing its identity in the process. The image crossed the boundaries too easily for it to be tied to single creation.

If we want to move beyond the binary model of cross-cultural exchange that privileges the major cultural centres of the world, then intermediaries such as Boym are important. They manifest the dynamic and imbricated processes involved in the transference of an image and its capacity to re-generate itself. In such an open-ended model, the purported peripheries matter as much as centres. They complicate the notion that cultural transfer is an exchange between clearly identified milieus. Images made by the purportedly peripheral artists demonstrate that the cultural production of any given locale is never coherent and self-contained. For these reasons, a truly global art history should be attentive to the cultural production of places and makers that have been considered peripheral, for they demonstrate how cultures are always *already* entangled. No image can exist without other images, and no artistic centre can exist in isolation.

Conclusion

A statue of an oriental-looking man (Fig. 6.1) adorns the corner of a grand house at the intersection of Favoritenstrasse and Kolschitzkygasse in Vienna's fourth district. The man wears a fez-like cap, an Ottoman kaftan, billowing trousers and pointy shoes. And he pours coffee into a cup placed on the tray that he holds in his hand. This act of coffee-pouring is one reason why the man deserved a monument in the centre of Vienna. Many Viennese today would recognise the figure as a tribute to Georg Franz Kolschitzky (1640–1694), the alleged owner of the first coffeehouse in the city, and—by tradition—a hero of the 1683 Siege of Vienna. The statue was commissioned from the prominent sculptor Emanuel Pendl (1845–1927) for the three-hundred year anniversary of the siege, and was fittingly placed on a building located on a street that had been named in memory of Kolschitzky in 1862.[647] One of the men particularly involved in the commission was Karl Zwirina, proprietor of a well-known coffeehouse, which occupied the site of the sculpture's proposed (and realised) location at the junction between Favoritenstrasse and Kolschitzkygasse.[648] The monument thus seemingly celebrates a local Viennese custom and the city's history.

But purists could not call Kolschitzky a local man. Born in Kulczyce (Ukrainian Kulchytsi) in Red Ruthenia into a noble Polish-Lithuanian family, he was either a Catholic or an Eastern Orthodox, a biographical detail that remains a subject of debate.[649] Some modern Polish

[647] Daniel Unowsky, 'Stimulating Culture: Coffee and Coffeehouses in Modern European History', *Journal of Urban History* 42, no. 4 (2016): 806; Tag Gronberg, 'Coffeehouse Orientalism', in *The Viennese Café and Fin-de-Siècle Culture*, ed. Charlotte Ashby, Tag Gronberg, and Simon Shaw-Miller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 63.

[648] Gronberg, 'Coffeehouse Orientalism', 60.

[649] Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, 'Jerzy Franciszek Kulczycki', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 16, 1970, 128–129.

scholars deem him Catholic, and thus an ethnic Pole, referring to him as Jerzy Franciszek Kulczycki,[650] while their Ukrainian counterparts insist on the man's Orthodox and Ruthenian roots, and call him by his Ukrainian name Yuriy Frants Kulchytsky.[651] Adding to the confusion (clearly, a nightmare for a nativist), is another figure: a young man named Kulczycki/Kulchytsky, who reputedly joined the Zaporozhian Cossacks, a semi-autonomous entity on the south-eastern corner of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[652] In this borderland region, Kulczycki/Kulchytsky mingled with many people, developing the command of Turkish, Romanian and German on top of Polish and Ruthenian. At some point, Kulczycki/Kulchytsky is believed to have been captured by Ottomans and held captive in Istanbul for several years. There, he is said to have improved his Turkish and become acquainted with Ottoman customs.[653] But given his linguistic skills, he was then hired by the Belgrade branch of the Austrian Oriental Company (*Orientalische Handelskompagnie*) to work as interpreter. In 1678, he moved to Vienna where he opened his own business trading oriental wares. There, he became to be known as Kolschitzky. Most of Kolschitzky's biography before his move to Belgrade is apocryphal, as elements of it derive from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources without any matching documents.[654] But what is certain is that by the time of the Battle of Vienna, Kolschitzky had already lived in the Habsburg imperial city for five years.

[650] Jerzy S. Kulczycki, 'Prawdziwa legenda wiedeńskiej wiktorii', *Wspólnota Polska*, no. 6 (2007), http://wspolnotapolska.home.pl/swp2/index3fe9.html?id=kw7_6_13.

[651] Ostap Hryzaj, *Die Ukrainer und die Befreiung Wiens 1683* (Vienna: Literarische Sektion d. Exekutiv-Komitees d. ukrain. Vereine in Österreich, 1934).

[652] Abrahamowicz, 'Jerzy Franciszek Kulczycki', 128.

[653] Ibid.

[654] Gronberg, 'Coffeehouse Orientalism', 61.

We learn about his activities during the 1683 siege from a near-contemporaneous account of the event, written by Johann Constantin Feige and published nine years later in 1694.[655] Feige presents Kolschitzky as a man who accomplishes nothing less than save Christendom from collapsing into the hands of the Turks. In this narrative, Kolschitzky—who is said to be fluent in Turkish—clad himself in Ottoman costume and crossed the enemy lines carrying important missives to Duke Charles of Lorraine, generalissimo of the Habsburg-led rescue army. In return, Kolschitzky received letters to carry back to the beleaguered Vienna. Upon learning about imminent relief force, city leaders did not surrender despite earlier plans, but continued fighting until the combined Habsburg and Polish-Lithuanian armies chased the Ottoman troops away from the walls of the imperial capital.[656]

Feige's account of Kolschitzky's adventures takes only three pages in a hefty volume that is over seven hundred pages long. But the publisher clearly saw this man as an important contributor to the success of the Vienna rescue campaign as he included a full-page graphic portrait of Kolschitzky (Fig. 2), one of only a few prints in the book. The image depicts him in Turkish attire and other Ottoman paraphernalia, including a sabre and a fez-cap. Similar in appearance to the street statue in Vienna by Pendl, the print might well have acted as a source of inspiration for this later representation. An inscription at the bottom-left makes claims to the image's documentary status, proclaiming Kolschitzky's ability to emulate Turkishness as the driving force behind the success of the 1683 Vienna rescue mission:

[655] Johann Constantin Feige, *Wunderbahrer Adlers-Schwung, oder Fernere Geschichts-Fortsetzung Ortelii Redivivi et Continuati*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Leopold Voigt, 1694).

[656] Ibid., 2:48, 50–52.

> In this dress, and armed like this, [he] left Vienna on 13 August, and passing through Turkish encampment he reached His Grace Duke Ch[arles] L[eopold] of Lorraine, and brought back the auspicious military intelligence, on the 17th day of said month, AD 1683.[657]

The inscription reasserts that it was Kolschitzky's ability to pass for an Ottoman soldier that made possible the exchange of intelligence between the imperial army and city defence troops. Both the main body of text and the print acknowledge Kolschitzky's aptitude for shifting back and forth between cultural conventions, manifesting an environment in which purposeful appropriation and cultural confusion went hand-in-hand: Kolschitzky was able to impersonate an Ottoman soldier confusing the Turks, but at the same—as the text recounts—he was mistaken for a Turk by Austrian peasants who nearly killed him, as they read his camouflage as an infallible sign of Turkishness.[658] Although a Christian and a denizen in Vienna, the Kolschitzky in Feige's narrative is profiled as a Muslim because of the material properties of his appearance. Both the story and the printed portrait insist on seeing Kolschitzky's mission as masquerade (he only puts on Ottoman costume temporarily to deceive the enemy), but simultaneously this masquerade is precisely how the beholder remembers the protagonist—an impostor Turkish soldier. As an image and as a literary construct, Kolschitzky reminds us that ethnicity, confession and even language are not fixed categories guarded by impenetrable firewalls, but rather a nexus of performative and descriptive utterances that are meaningful and relevant only insofar as they are perceived as such.

Afterlives of this narrative paint an even messier picture. Even though Feige's story has no mention of it, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century versions of Kolschitzky's contributions to

[657] 'In dieser Kleidung und also bewaffnet gienge et aus Wienn den 13. Augusti durch das Türckische Läger biss er zu J. Hertzogl. Dux Ch. L. auss Lothring komen und brachte von dar die erwünschte Kundschaft wegen des Einsatzes zurück, den 17. dito Aō. 1683.' In ibid., vol. 2, fol. 48.

[658] Ibid., 2:51.

the saving of Vienna in 1683 make the man's life even more intertwined with that of the imperial capital.[659] In those newer accounts, Kolschitzky is said to receive several sacks of brown beans that had been left behind by the retreating Ottoman army. Kolschitzky—because of the years he had spent in Istanbul—recognised these beans as coffee, and was granted an imperial privilege to open the first coffeehouse in Vienna. And the rest is history. Who could now imagine Vienna without its ever-present cafés (*Kaffeehäuser*)?

But the story, like some other biographical 'facts' about Kolschitzky, is probably made up. Kolschitzky, if he ever ran a coffeehouse, was unlikely the first coffeehouse owner. Historians now believe that coffee drinking had been popular in Vienna before 1683, and the first coffeehouses were probably run by Armenians.[660] But, certainly, by the 1880s—when Zwirina was striving to erect the statue of Kolschitzky above his coffeehouse—the story had functioned as an alluring urban myth. It perpetuated assumptions about local history not because there was any particularly strong historical evidence to confirm Kolschitzky's role as the first coffeehouse owner in Vienna, but because the story appeared plausible by virtue of its substitution with the available 'facts' about Kolschitzky's life: his captivity in Istanbul, his saving of Vienna, and the circulation of images depicting Kolschitzky in Ottoman costume. What is telling about this animation of local history is that an Ottoman custom of coffee drinking is said to be brought about by a foreigner (a Pole or a Ruthenian), and that it has profoundly changed the cultural landscape of Vienna to this day. There is a mutual dependency between localness and foreignness in this story: while a foreigner transforms the ways in which the Viennese run their

[659] Abrahamowicz, 'Jerzy Franciszek Kulczycki', 128.

[660] Helmut Kretschmer, *Kapuziner, Einspänner, Schalerl Gold: Zur Geschichte der Wiener Kaffeehäuser* (Vienna: Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, 2006); Karl Teply, 'Kundschafter, Kuriere, Kaufleute, Kaffeesieder: Die Legende des Wiener Kaffeehauses auf dem Röntgenschirm der Geschichte und der Volkskunde', *Österreich in Geschichte Und Literatur* 22, no. 1 (1978): 1–17.

lives and think of themselves as a city of coffeehouse culture, Kolschitzky's life is at the same time narrated to fit into the Viennese version of this story (Vienna is seen as a victor that appropriates an Ottoman custom only because it wants to, not because it has to).

The story of Kolschitzky/Kulczycki/Kulchytsky runs parallel to the other stories recounted by this dissertation. His life was messy and difficult to trace, and yet modern historians want to untangle and situate it within a linear historical path, preferably pinning down his ethnicity, confession and even all the languages that he allegedly spoke. Yet Poland-Lithuania's location at a crossroads between east and west makes it improbable that Kolschitzky/Kulczycki/Kulchytsky would have defined himself along any clear-cut lines. Conversely, the country's liminal place on the map of Europe makes it highly probable that a man like him would have experienced many different cultures and creatively adapted elements of them into his life. Kolschitzky/Kulczycki/Kulchytsky is a confusing historical figure (especially for a nativist), and hence the desire to pin him down. The reason why he epitomised the 1683 victory (both as an image and a textual protagonist), and later became a token of the Viennese coffee culture is precisely because of the ways that cultural confusion can create stories that feel so real as to become meaningful.

This thesis has demonstrated that cultural entanglement often generated cultural confusion, whereby observers were either not aware of the provenance of many foreign cultural forms (treating them instead as local), or they misidentified their place of origins. Like the representations of Kolschitzky/Kulczycki/Kulchytsky, the images and objects of material culture analysed in this thesis often acted as signifiers of localness (and even nationhood), but only insofar as they generated confusion of their origin. Oftentimes these artefacts had little to do with the place of which 'essence' they supposed to represent. Treating Poland-Lithuania as a

springboard for the study of mutual interdependencies between various material and visual traditions, this study has thus foregrounded several case studies where the foreign was paradoxically being treated as local or native. In highlighting processes of transculturation, all these case studies focus attention on the contingent and unstable nature of national and ethnic appellations, providing historical examples to challenge their currency today. This is still an unfinished project that is becoming more pressing to pursue in a world that is hastily heading towards nativism and cultural isolationism.

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Figures

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