The Global Renaissance

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INTRODUCTION

On the flyleaf of his copy of Vitruvius's work on architecture, Antonio de Mendoza, first viceroy of New Spain, recorded that he "read this book in the city of Mexico" in April 1539.[1] At the time, Franciscan professors in nearby Tlatelolco were teaching young Aztec nobles to write like Cicero. Later in the same century, Jesuits presented Akbar the Great with prints by Dürer for Mughal court artists to copy. Within little more than a generation's span, Matteo Ricci introduced Chinese mandarins to Renaissance rhetoric, philosophy, astronomy, geography, and the art of memory as well as to the Christian message.[2] Previous intellectual and artistic impulses had spanned Eurasia, especially in the first millennium B.C.E. and the Song and Mongol eras, but the Renaissance can fairly be called the first genuinely global movement in the history of ideas—the first, that is, to resonate on both hemispheres and to penetrate deep into continental interiors on both sides of the equator.

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[1] J. J. López-Portillo, "'Another Jerusalem': Political Legitimacy and Courtly Government in the Kingdom of New Spain (1535–1568)" (PhD dissertation, University of London, 2012), 294.

[2] J. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (London: Faber, 1984).

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The so-called "global turn" in the writing of history today involves increased interest not only in the rest of the world on the part of Western historians, but also in the global context of what used to be seen as European movements, among them the Renaissance, a term we use here not to denominate a whole period but to refer to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century movement to revive the culture of classical antiquity, Greek and Roman.[3] The period term that will be employed in the pages that follow is "early modern," running roughly from the early fifteenth to the late eighteenth century, when the American, French, and Industrial Revolutions inaugurated the late modern era.

In this article we will not be discussing the idea of "Renaissances" in the plural—Chinese, Islamic, and so on—as has been done by Arnold Toynbee, Erwin Panofsky, and more recently by that vigorous opponent of Eurocentrism, the late Jack Goody. Instead we focus on the relation of the European Renaissance to the wider world, viewing that world as both stimulating and responding to cultural developments in Europe. Many valuable studies of aspects of this global context for the Renaissance have appeared in the last generation. The purpose of this study is not to add to their number but to attempt a synthesis, a big picture very different from the one that predominated thirty years ago (let alone sixty years ago, when one of the authors was studying the Renaissance at Oxford).

In some ways, the Renaissance is best understood as an acceleration of longstanding or intermittent interest in reviving the supposed glories of antiquity in the medieval West, but for present purposes, we treat it as a single, continuous episode, first clearly detectable toward the middle of the fourteenth century, fully discernible in Italy in the quattrocento, and then generalized and in some fields dominant in much of Europe in the sixteenth century. We propose to take account of the specificity of the Renaissance, like that of other movements of cultural revival, as we try to position the Renaissance in the contexts of other, farther-flung cultures, exploring the problems of where it came from, where it went, how it got there, and what happened to it on arrival.

Eurocentrism has long been in retreat.[4] Yet the importance of the Renaissance in the "rise of the West," the origins of "modernity," or the vanguard of cultural "globalization" (more precisely, in the conquest of much of the world by values and practices of Western origin) still has powerful academic advocates and tenacious popular appeal.[5] If the Renaissance arose independently within Western tradition without decisive input from elsewhere, the potential implications are arresting: The claim that the Renaissance was an entirely home-grown movement becomes inseparable from the case for what is commonly called Eurocentrism—the assertion of uniqueness of Western achievements and their unparalleled impact on the rest of the world. The Renaissance, in such circumstances, would have to be seen as one of the West's gifts to the rest. But would that be a valid or useful vision? Would it be consistent with the evidence? It is time to put the doctrine of the centrality of the Renaissance in global history to the test of conformity or variance with the facts.

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[3] Previous work in print on the subject includes J. Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 33–61; P. Burke, *The European Renaissance: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), a comparative study focused on creative reception; C. Farago, ed., *Reframing the Renaissance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), discussing global perspectives; and S. Gruzinski, *L'Aigle et le dragon* (Paris: Fayard, 2012), 405–15, emphasizing connections between Mexico and China.

[4] See for instance Vassilis Lambropoulos, *The Rise of Eurocentrism: Anatomy of an Interpretation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Peter Gran, *Beyond Eurocentrism:*

Part I: Origins and Development of the Renaissance

The first really influential attempt to view the movement in a global perspective was launched in 1954, when Arnold Toynbee, the scholar who, perhaps, did most to encourage historians in the comparative study of civilizations, denied that the Italian Renaissance of the quattrocento was "a unique occurrence." According to him, it was "no more than one particular instance of a recurrent historical phenomenon."[6] Subsequent researchers discovered or asserted revivals of classical ideas, style, and imagery in just about every century from the fifth to the fifteenth. As renaissances multiplied in the literature in the West, so they appeared with increasing frequency in scholars' accounts of culture in other parts of the world. For Jack Goody, the Renaissance was part of a

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a New View of Modern World History (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996); James Blaut, *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (New York: Guildford, 2000); Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism: Modernity, Religion, and Democracy—A Critique of Eurocentrism and Culturalism* (New York: Monthly Review, 2009); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[5] John M. Headley, *The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007). For a study of the abiding prevalence of Eurocentrism in academia, see Luke Clossey and Nicholas Guyatt, "It's a Small World After All: The Wider World in Historians' Peripheral Vision," *Perspectives in History*, May 2013, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2013/its-a-small-world-after-all.

[6] A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 9:4.

family of renascences.[7] All cultures have their own "classics," and retrospective values become fashionable or popular or influential almost everywhere from time to time.

Orbiting the core meaning of the Renaissance as a revival of the classical world are closely associated ideas that have burnished the reputation of the Renaissance in a broader sense, as well as reinforcing the conceit that the Renaissance, and the Europeans who created it, were exceptional. Revived interest in a classical past does have parallels outside Europe, but what of those quattrocento breakthroughs that supposedly pushed Europe beyond the achievements of antiquity? To give the Renaissance a role in our narratives that is not just classicizing, but modernizing, we may find it helpful to explore not only revival movements in general but also specific parallels and precedents in what are commonly itemized as peculiar features of the Renaissance: textual criticism, skepticism, and linear perspective.[8]

Philology

Keen interest in manuscript transmission helped spark the Renaissance. The first humanists' local and regional travels in pursuit of manuscripts fundamentally informed the development of their ideas, in a way that foreshadows how global travellers' reports would inform the ideas of the developed Renaissance in the sixteenth century. Ancient scholars, too, had done philological work, but with Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) and Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) philology moved explicitly beyond the accomplishments of the ancients. Poliziano took up common practices such as distinguishing between direct and indirect quotation and, following Petrarch, preferring older sources, but to impress his Medici patrons, he went beyond this in two ways.

The first is understanding the value of errors: in what would become known as *lectio difficilior potior*, the more difficult reading is preferred because it is less likely to have been the result of editors' polishing. By the end of the early-modern period this idea would become widely accepted in philology in general and in biblical scholarship in particular.[9] Although we associate this kind of sophisticated appreciation of the relationship between a text and its manuscript history with modernity, the *lectio difficilior potior* principle is actually a bit older. In tenth-century India, Vallabhadeva wrote commentaries on the fifth-century *Raghuvaṃśa* (Lineage of Raghu) by Kālidāsa, a text that existed in a problematically high number of variations from a problematically wide range of regions. Vallabhadeva preferred a certain manuscript as the oldest because its meaning was the most *aprasiddha* अप्रसिद्ध, unusual or obscure.[10] At least by the Song Dynasty, Chinese scholars of the *Book of Documents* would take as older and more authentic those chapters that were more difficult to read, in terms of either the language generally or, paleographically, the very forms of the characters. Already in the twelfth century Wu Yu 吳棫 found value and authority in text that was 詰屈聱牙, "query-curling and tooth-twisting."[11]

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[7] J. Goody, *Renaissances: The One and the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); P. Burke, "Jack Goody and the Comparative History of Renaissances," *Theory, Culture and Society* 26 (2009): 16–31.

[8] Self-fashioning, a fourth feature often linked to the Renaissance, might be gainfully relocated to an earlier, Islamic tradition. See Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *1492: The Year the World Began* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 268–71.

[9] Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 112–93; Anthony Grafton, *Defenders*

In addition to *lectio difficilior potior*, Poliziano developed a second breakthrough, a genealogical method, called *eliminatio codicum descriptorum*, which takes into account the relationship among sources—that is, the cause-and-effect-history of the textual transmission. Poliziano's contemporaries tended to ignore the genealogical approach—simply going back to counting texts—and it had to wait for a half century after Poliziano's death to become common practice.

A similar, but more obsessively analytical, approach to the genealogy of knowledge had already arisen in Islam: Concern for sources, their transmission, and their reliability followed quickly on the birth of that religion. For centuries Muslim scholars guaranteed their accounts of sayings of the prophet by the device of the *isnād*, which lists out the transmission history of each specific saying (*ḥadīth*). (These writers were aware of and perhaps indebted to Herodotus, who foregrounded his own decisions weighing historical sources.) As Muslims occupied much of the heartland of classical antiquity in the Hellenistic world and the former Roman Empire, they had access to the same legacy as Latin

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of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 27, 47–75; E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of the Printed Book* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 4–10, 43, 49–51; L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140–64.

[10] *Vallabhadeva's Kommentar (Śāradā-Version) zum Kumārasambhava des Kālidāsa*, ed. M. S. Narayana Murti (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1980), 27. See Sheldon Pollock, "What Was Philosophy in Sanskrit?" in *World Philology*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman, and Ku-ming Kevin Chang (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015), 121.

[11] Ye Guoliang 葉國良, *Songren Yijing Gaijing Kao* 宋人疑經改經考 (Taipei: Guo li Taiwan da xue chu ban wei yuan hui, 1980), 49. Thanks to Bruce Rusk for his generous and learned assistance here.

Christians: Indeed, the availability of texts and intact monuments from Greco-Roman antiquity was superior in the Islamic world, which covered relatively less despoiled and ravaged parts of the region. Goody drew attention to the "humanism" of a series of scholars,[12] starting with the ninth-century ʿAbdallāh ibn Qutaybah, who applied to governance the insights of a philological program that anticipated later intellectual developments in the West. By the ninth century Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsá al-Tirmidhī (824–892) moved beyond a good/bad binary to classify each *isnād* in one of three categories of probable reliability.[13] By the thirteenth century, Ibn al-Ṣalāh had supplemented these three grades with sixty-two other categories or disciplines (*naw'*), including five types of transmitters and seven types of transmissions, indicating tremendous precision in the study of transmission. One category, for example, is the *munqaṭi'*, a *ḥadīth* the *isnād* of which has adjacent transmitters who could not have met in person.[14]

Compared to the sophistication of medieval Islamic and Indian philology, the breakthroughs of the European Renaissance might best be described as little more than catching up to the world's best scholarship.

Skepticism

Our next idea, skepticism, is an attractive index for intellectual deftness as it demands a certain detachment and sophistication—not just knowledge, but knowledge about knowledge. Neither Pyrrho nor Sextus found much love in the early Christian world. Gregory of Nazianzus (died 390) complains that "ever since the Sextuses and the Pyrrhos have . . . infected the churches [like a vile and malignant disease], babbling has been regarded as culture." At the same time, the emperor Julian (died 363) rejoiced that "the gods have already in their wisdom destroyed their works, so that most of their books are no longer available." Pope Leo I (ca. 440s) mentions the Pyrrhonists in his attack on Manichaeism, which may be the last reference to them or him in the Latin West for a millennium.[15]

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[12] See Goody, *Renaissances.*

[13] ʿAlī Nāṣirī, *An Introduction to Hadith: History and Sources*, trans. Mansoor Limba (London: MIU Press, 2013), 188.

[14] Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 28, 29–33, 288–89.

[15] Luciano Floridi, *Sextus Empiricus: The Transmission and Recovery of Pyrrhonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12, 22.

Skepticism returned in the Renaissance as a byproduct of the humanists' interests in obscure ancient texts. We see it become dangerously important in its own right by the end of the fifteenth century, in, for example, the fate of Savonarola, who aimed to use Sextus to destroy Aristotle and all Greek "invented" knowledge, leaving intact only Christian revelation and the voices of inspired prophets, like Savonarola himself. His convent of San Marco had five manuscript copies of Sextus, and Savonarola asked three of his confrères, including Giorgio Antonio Vespucci (the uncle of Amerigo), to translate Sextus into Latin. His antagonist, Gioacchino Torriani, the Dominican general, was consulting the Vatican's copy of Sextus at the same time.[16] Issues of certainty proved decisive in resolving Savonarola's case. The jurist Ormannozzo Deti preferred the "certain" over "what was not certain": With all the turmoil and chaos surrounding the friar, it seemed safer to agree with the pope. The ambassador Guidantonio Vespucci argued that if it were "certain, completely certain" (he begins in the Italian subjunctive "si fussi certo" but switches to Latin "omni certitudine") that Savonarola were sent by God, then better to allow him to preach; since they had no such certainty, it was better to side with the pope.[17] The translations Savonarola had ordered did not come in time to save him, but we know what he was thinking through the works of his defender and biographer, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533), the less famous nephew of Giovanni (who also happened to own a copy of Sextus). According to Gianfrancesco, Savonarola had been recommending reading Sextus as a good introduction to Christianity. Gianfrancesco's *Examen Vanitatis* built on Savonarola's idea.[18]

Did Renaissance skepticism have precedents in other cultures? The idea of uncertainty thrived in medieval India. Texts copied as late as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries attacked the *pramāṇas* as the means of true knowledge. Jayarāśi's (ca. 800) *Tattvopaplavasiṃha* (The Lion that Devours All Principles) is indiscriminate in its offense, which it self-identifies as "terrifying" or "dreadful."[19] The *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādya* (The Sweets of Refutation) of Śrīharṣa (ca. 1150) begins by wishing, "O men of intelligence, may you attain to the joy of universal conquest, even by merely repeating parrot-like this work of mine—rendering

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[16] Richard Popkin, *The History of Scepticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3–7, 19–29; Floridi, *Sextus Empiricus*, 30–33.

[17] Denis Fachard, *Consulte e pratiche della Repubblica Fiorentina, 1498–1505* (Geneva: Droz, 1993), 60, 51.

[18] Popkin, *History of Scepticism*, 19–29.

[19] The main monograph in English is Eli Franco, *Perception, Knowledge, and Disbelief: A Study of Jayarāśi's Scepticism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1994).

'speechless' all your proud opponents by utterly demolishing the possibility of either words or the things discussed by them." After explaining why specific arguments are "as worthless as chewing on dried grass" or "as useless as looking for a crow's teeth," he concludes with generalized strategies for destabilizing any apparent knowledge.[20]

Muslim thinkers, meanwhile, had greater access to Greek skeptical texts than did the Christians, although no specific references to Pyrrho are known. The *Kitāb al-Manāẓir* (Book of Optics) of Ibn al-Haytham (died ca. 1040), which was very influential in Western Europe, reviewed a series of optical illusions and cast light on some of the cognitive processes that subvert our sense of certainty.[21] al-Ghazālī (died 1111) had his own skeptical experience, recorded in the *Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Rescuer from Error):

> This disease defied all cure and lasted for almost two months, during which I embraced the [skeptical] creed in actual fact, though not in speech or expression. Eventually, God cured me . . . and my mind was restored to health and balance. The rational necessary beliefs were once again accepted and trusted, both securely and certainly. This did not come about by composing a proof or by an arrangement of words, but rather by a light that God almighty cast into my breast.[22]

So, like advanced philology, Renaissance skepticism, rooted in an ancient import from India to Greece, had precedents in medieval Asia.

Linear Perspective

Finally, perhaps most iconic to the Renaissance is the convention of linear perspective. Seeing a perfectly worked out image gives one a powerful impression of space seen, as in real life, from a single point at a single time. This appears to be an innovation unique to the Renaissance, and it is indeed difficult to find a precedent outside Europe.

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[20] Śrīharṣa, *The Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhāḍya of Shri-Harṣa, an English translation*, trans. Ganganatha Jha (Delhi, India: Sri Satguru, 1986), 3, 704–5; Phyllis Granoff, *Philosophy and Argument in Late Vedānta* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1978), 143–46. See Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *A Comparative History of World Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 233–73.

[21] David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 18–32; Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 4–43.

[22] Al-Ghazali, "The Rescuer from Error," in *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Muhammad Ali Khalidi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63.

This absence, it turns out, is the result not of the inability of non-European artists, but of their artistic sensibility. Li Cheng 李成 (919–967), for example, painted images with something like linear perspective. Although these have not survived, we have evidence of them thanks to the eleventh-century *Mengxi Bitan* 梦溪笔谈 (The Dream Pool Essays), by the Song dynasty statesman and polymath Shen Guo 沈括, who writes, "When Li Cheng paints mountain pavilions and edifices he paints the eaves from below. He believed that looking in an upward direction one perceives the eaves of a pagoda as a person on the even ground and is able to see the beams and rafters of its structure." Using Li's perspective, Shen continues, one sees "one layer of the mountains at one time."

The Chinese discovery of linear perspective did not revolutionize Chinese art, and it failed to impress Shen Guo:

> If we apply Li's method to the painting of real mountains, we are unable to behold more than one layer . . . at one time. . . . Similarly we would be excluded from a view into all things . . . in the valleys, in the chambers of houses and their courtyards. If we stand in the east of the mountain, its western part would be a far-off scene, and standing on its western part, the eastern mountain scene would likewise be a view into distance. Could that be called art? . . . His measurement of height and distance certainly is a fine thing. But should one attach paramount importance to the angles and corners of buildings? . . . Li Cheng surely does not understand the principle of "viewing the part from the angle of totality."[23]

Linear perspective was condemned in China, though it was celebrated in Italy three centuries later—but even the Renaissance had some awareness that linear perspective is less the ultimate goal than a pragmatic compromise, and an expensive one in terms of what is lost. Donatello (as recorded by Vasari a century later) complained that an obsession with mathematical precision made Paolo Uccello "leave the certain for the uncertain."[24] A long-lived chorus raises doubts about linear perspective, throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.[25] On the other hand, Renaissance Europe did make use of something akin to the Chinese-style "angle of totality," for example in the design of fortresses, or in describing the ability of Jesus in heaven to see on earth.[26] The use of linear perspective in Renaissance art was not an unprecedented discovery, but a convention that found ways to be useful.

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[23] Tsung Pai-hua, "Space-Consciousness in Chinese Painting," trans. Ernest J. Schwartz, *Sino-Austrian Cultural Journal* 1 (1949): 27. On the comparative history of visual perspective, see Jean-Yves Heurtebise, "Comparative Aesthetics: The Construction of Perspective in Chinese and European Paintings," in *Artistic Traditions of Non-European Cultures*, ed. B. Łakomska (Turon: Tako, 2013), 2:49–75.

[24] "Lasciare il certo per l'incerto." Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti Architetti, Pittori, et Scultori Italiani* (Rome: Pagliarini, 1759), 205; Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75.

Part II: Extra-European Influences

Extra-European analogies, parallels, and precedents are not evidence of extra-European origins. Parallels are one thing, influence another.[27] Similar episodes in the history of different cultures may arise independently or be traceable to common causes rather than to the diffusion of influence from place to place. Great cultural movements, however, do not usually happen by parthenogenesis. Cross-fertilization nearly always helps and is usually vital. In classical antiquity Helicon had an "east face": Ancient Greeks shared much of their lore with, and got some of their learning from, cultures on the eastern shore of the Aegean or in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Greek skepticism gained momentum from Pyrrho of Elis, who picked up ideas in India while in the train of Alexander the Great (and Greek skepticism may have returned to India to influence Nāgārjuna [fl. ca. 200], whose teachings in turn would exert a tremendous influence on Chinese thought).[28] Logic, philosophy, science, art, and religious thought in the first millennium B.C.E. exhibited, from East Asia to Mediterranean Europe, continuities so strong as to suggest that some content, at least, must have been transmitted along the trade routes that spanned or looped the landmass. In the case of the high Middle Ages, it is hard to accept that the florescence of ideas and technologies in Western Europe was unstimulated by influences that flowed with the "Mongol Peace." The period of acceleration in science in early modern Europe owed some of its urging to the discoveries explorers, scholars, and specimen-hunters made in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, we increasingly acknowledge, borrowed aesthetic and political models from China, India, and Japan and relied on contacts with remoter cultures, in the Americas and the Pacific, for such influential notions as those of the noble savage and what has been called "green imperialism." If the Renaissance were to have happened in Europe without comparable external influences the anomaly would be startling.

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[25] For examples, see Antonio Filarete, *Trattato di architettura* [ca. 1465], ed. L. Grassi, (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1972), 2:657; Baldassarre Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Venice: F[ederico] T[orresano d'Asola], 1538 [1528]), Aiii; Daniele Barbaro, *Dieci libri dell'architettura di* M. *Vitruvio* (Venice: Senese, 1567), 321; Giovan Battista Belici (Belluzzi), *Nuova inventione di fabricar fortezze* (Venice: Baglioni, 1598), 88; Emanuele Tesauro, *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico* (Turin: Sinibaldo, 1654), 89, 127.

[26] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 104. Examples of this kind of fortress design run from Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* (Paris, 1576) to Moritz von Prittwitz und Gaffron, *Lehrbuch der Befestigungskunst und des Festungskrieges* (Berlin: Herbig, 1865).

[27] We omit as well known and ancillary for present purposes the Byzantine influence on the Renaissance in Latin Christendom. See D. J. Geanokoplos, *Interaction of the Sibling Byzantine and Western Cultures* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976), emphasizing Byzantine elements in the Renaissance; K. Setton, "The Byzantine Background to the Italian Renaissance," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 100 (1956): 1–56.

[28] Christopher I. Beckwith, *Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Nonetheless, the case for seeing the Renaissance as an event severed from extra-European sources of influence is, on the face of it, strong. From the mid-fourteenth to the late fifteenth centuries, in the very period when the Renaissance, as we define it, took shape, "The West" had few or none of the enriching direct contacts with China, central Asia, and India that had inseminated earlier movements with exotic notions and representations or equipped them with useful knowledge and technology or inspiring ideas.

Islam

The rupture of trans-Eurasian contacts occurred just as the Renaissance was becoming discernible. In 1342, a newly appointed archbishop of China was sent east, never to be heard from again; after enough time had passed to presume death, a new archbishop was sent, and this pious human sacrifice was repeated eleven times before 1490.[29] No further individual cases of European travelers successfully crossing Eurasia overland are known before the sixteenth century. When Columbus set out for China on 1492, his royal masters' information about that country was so out of date that they furnished him with diplomatic credentials addressed to the Great Khan.

The culture from which the Christian world appropriated most in the interim was Islam.[30] Renaissance painting would have looked very different without objects and pigments imported from the Dar al-Islam: the turquoise and Turkish red that colored canvases in unprecedented hues; the textiles and carpets that added texture to the scenes; the Kufic and pseudo-Kufic inscriptions painters added to lend an illusory air of authenticity to their depictions of the Holy Land in portrayals of sacred history. Demand for exotic types and settings in sacred painting drove artists to Islam (as well as to Tatar slaves, when available) as a source of inspiration and of models. In architecture, it is clear that influences from Islam were at least as important as in painting. The early-fourteenth-century dome of Solṭāniyeh, the mausoleum of the Il-khan Öljaitü, may have inspired Brunelleschi's design of the dome of the Florence cathedral: Each structure used herring-bone brickwork as well as two nested domes sandwiching ribbing supports.[31] Perhaps the biggest debt of Renaissance artists to Islamic culture was to the repertoire of decorative motifs, floral, calligraphic, and geometrical, that we still describe as "arabesques." In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, carpets and metalwork in this style (ewers, dishes, and so on) were fashionable items in Venice. It used to be thought that these forms of metalwork were made in Venice, and the style of decoration was labelled "Veneto-Saracenic." It is now believed, however, that these objects were made in Damascus and other places in the Middle East, often to order, complete with the coat of arms of the future owner. From the later fifteenth century onward, Italian artists drew on this decorative repertoire.[32]

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[29] Joseph Sebes, "Jesuit Attempts to Establish an Overland Route to China," *Canada-Mongolia Review* 5 (1979): 67; Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 71–72.

[30] The scholarship is extensive. To single out a few: H. Belting, *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011); L. Darling, "The Renaissance and the Middle East," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the*

In the age of the *uomo universale*, what happened in visual arts had inescapable parallels in what we would think of as mathematics, science, and technology. Piero della Francesca's understanding of

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Renaissance, ed. G. Ruggiero (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002); D. Gutas, *Greek Thought in Arabic Translation* (London: Routledge, 1998); D. Howard, *Venice and the East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); G. Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), which notes Europe's intellectual debt to Islam; J. Raby, *Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode* (London: Tauris, 1982) on Islamic influences on Europe; G. Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); N. G. Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), which argues that the revival of Greek medicine did not drive out Arab traditions.

[31] Piero Sanpaolesi, "La cupola di Santa Maria del Fiore ed il mausoleo di Soltanieh: Rapporti di forma e struttura fra la cupola del Duomo di Firenze ed il mausoleo del Ilkhan Ulgiaitu a Soltanieh," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz* 26 (1972): 221–260.

[32] Sylvia Auld, "Veneto-Saracenic," in *Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (New York: Grove, 1996), 32:160–62; Stanley Morison, "Venice and the Arabesque Ornament," in Morison, *Selected Essays*, ed. David McKitterick, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1:142–58.

perspective derived in part from his reading of Euclid in a translation from Arabic. The Franciscan mathematician Fra Luca Pacioli, who is credited with the first complete expositions in the West of double-entry book-keeping and of triangulation and who collaborated with Leonardo, relied heavily on Arabic treatises in composing his works. Copernicus was only one in a long line of the Western mathematicians and astronomers who drew on work compiled in Persia in the thirteenth century; the exact means of transmission is unclear but the echoes are unmistakeable.[33]

In the case of literature, Boccaccio and Chaucer were representative examples of Western writers who had access to many tales stemming from the East. There is a remarkable parallel between the lyrics of Petrarch and his followers and the *ghazals* of the Islamic world, evoking the sweet pain of love, the cruelty of the beloved, and so on. In any case, Petrarch was familiar with the poetry of the troubadours, who were in turn familiar with the poetry of Al-'Andalus (the very name "troubadour" is derived from the Arabic *taraba*, "to sing"). Western accounts of the tricks of beggars and thieves, going back to the fourteenth century and reaching their climax in the sixteenth, follow Arab accounts of the urban underworld, the *Banū Sāsān*, from the ninth century onward. The picaresque tradition is a continuation of an earlier Arab tradition, that of the *maqāmāt*, going back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. This should not surprise us, since the growth of large cities in the Middle East, such as Cairo, Baghdad, and Damascus, also preceded the growth of cities in Western Europe.[34]

In the domain of intellectual history, we have only fragments of information, fascinating as they are. Muslim skeptics perhaps bridged the gap between ancient Greece and Nicholas of Autrecourt, the most skeptical of the medieval Christians.[35] The commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* by Averroes (Ibn Rushd) was published in Latin translation in Venice in 1481; Regiomontanus transcribed the *Algebra* of Al-Khwārizmī; Georg von Peuerbach knew the work of the ninth century Arab astronomer al-Battānī; and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) was studied in the Renaissance as he had been in the later Middle Ages.[36] In his famous oration on the dignity of humanity, Pico della Mirandola quoted a remark by "Abdala the Saracen," as he called him (more exactly Ibn Qutaybah) to the effect that "nothing is more wonderful than man."

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[33] George Saliba, *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories during the Golden Age of Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Joseph T. Clark, "'Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue' in Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton," in *Transformation and Tradition in the Sciences*, ed. Everett Mendelsohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 67–80.

[34] Enrico Cerulli, "Petrarca e gli arabi," *Rivista di cultura classica e medievale* 7 (1965): 331–36; Jareer Abu-Haidar, "*Maqamat* Literature and the Picaresque Novel," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 5 (1974): 1–10; Clifford E. Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

[35] For a cautionary note, see Taneli Kukkonen, "Al-Ghazâlî's Skepticism Revisited," in *Rethinking the History of Skepticism*, ed. H. Lagerlund (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), 121–39.

South and East Asia

Still, the input from the Islamic world seems too limited, selective, and, in some cases, late to compromise the case in favor of the homegrown Renaissance. The most problematic provenance of possible influences in the making of the Renaissance lay farther afield in India and China, which had contributed so much to Western arts and thoughts in antiquity and the Middle Ages and would do so again in the Enlightenment.

Early in the twentieth century Renaissance scholars searched for Chinese origins. In 1910 the critic Oskar Münsterberg noticed the similarities between Leonardo's landscape style and Chinese precedents, arguing that the correspondences were too exact to be coincidental. Two years later Aby Warburg discovered an Indian astrological image in the frescoes in Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara (transmitted to Italy via the Arab astrologer Abū Ma'shar or Albumazar).[37] In the early 1920s Gustave Soulier, who had made a reputation as an expert on Cimabue, claimed that much that was innovative in Western painting of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance resembled Buddhist models from China and India: The similarities, he argued, in themes, gestures, the rendition of flesh, the etiolated complexions, the diaphanous textures, the delicate hands, the long fingers were so marked as to make it unthinkable that Westerners could have developed them by coincidence.[38] At about the same time Yukio Yashiro was drawn to study Botticelli because he perceived an affinity—not, however, alleging any connexion—between the work of Botticelli and Japanese traditions, from picture scrolls to the woodcuts of Utamaro.[39] In the next decade, a Russian expert on Renaissance philosophy wove the evidence into a general theory: The Renaissance, at least in painting, was the result of

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[36] Siraisi, *Avicenna*.

[37] Oskar Münsterberg, *Chinesische Kunstgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Esslingen: N. Neff, 1910–1912); Aby Warburg, "Italienische Kunst und Internationale Astrologie im Palazzo Schifanoja zu Ferrara," in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1932), 2:459–81.

[38] Gustave Soulier, *Les Influences orientales dans la peinture toscane* (Paris: Laurens, 1924).

[39] Yukio Yashiro, *Sandro Botticelli and the Florentine Renaissance* (London : The Medici Society, 1929).

Chinese influence.[40] Under the scrutiny of Leonardo Olschki toward the end of the Second World War, however, the sum of these early enquiries did not seem to amount to much. Most of the alleged Asiatic exoticism, he averred, was of Italian origin, both technically and stylistically. "There is no trace of East Asiatic influence."[41] Since then, scholars rationally interested in the similarities between Chinese and Western art in the fifteenth century have focused on the development theories of common or universal sensibility, rather than on arguments for cultural transmission.

Technology, as far as we know at present, was the field in which medieval Europeans were keenest to appropriate Chinese influence. Technologies that we now associate with "the rise of the West" to global hegemony originated in China and reached Europe in the course of the cultural transmissions of the high Middle Ages: nautical technologies, such as the separable bulkhead, the rudder, and direction-finding devices; key ingredients of early capitalism and industrialization, such as paper money and the blast furnace; and gunpowder, the key element in military firepower. The temptation to seek continuations of Chinese influence in the fifteenth century is therefore strong. There are suggestive similarities between the engineering devices depicted in a section on implements in the early-fourteenth-century Chinese treatise on agricultural improvements, the *Nong Shu*—gears, for instance, and devices for pumping, bridging, scaling, boring, and grinding—and drawings in quattrocento Italian designers' notebooks, from Mariano di Jacopo il Taccola, "the Sienese Archimedes," and his fellow-citizen Francesco di Giorgio Martini to Leonardo. No text of the *Nong Shu*, however, or anything similar, is known to have existed in Europe, and there are equally convincing precedents in fourteenth-century European works.[42]

Printing continues to provoke speculations. Was movable type a Western innovation or a case of the transfer of technology from East Asia? Printing was invented in China, in the seventh century C.E. or soon after, but usually took the form of block printing, which was better suited to Chinese writing. All the same, the Chinese did experiment with moveable type from the eleventh century onward, while in Korea founts of moveable type were cast and a twenty-four-letter alphabet was devised by order of two successive rulers in the first half of the fifteenth century, leading to a system of book production with what the French scholar Henri-Jean Martin has called "an almost hallucinatory similarity to Gutenberg's."[43]

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[40] I. V. Pouzyna, *La Chine, l'Italie et les débûts de la Renaissance* (Paris: Les Éditions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1935).

[41] Leonardo Olschki, "Asiatic Exoticism and the Italian Art of the Early Renaissance," *Art Bulletin* 26 (1944): 105–8.

[42] Roxann Prazniak, "Menzies and the New Chinoiserie," *Medieval History Journal* 13 (2010): 115–30.

Albert Kapr has linked Gutenberg with the Byzantine world, through a probable partnership with Nicholas of Cusa—who spent considerable time in Mainz and would have seen the printing press as a godsend in his quest to standardize liturgical handbooks—and through Nicholas's known friendship with Basilios Bessarion. Thanks to these two cardinals, Kapr speculates, Gutenberg may have received news of the remarkable Korean press.[44] A geographically closer, and thus perhaps more likely, inspiration may have been the moveable-type press used by the Uyghurs in Central Asia from around 1300;[45] certainly in the century and a half before Gutenberg technical intelligence could have traveled the three thousand kilometres across the Il-Khanate or its successor states to Christian populations in the Caucasus and beyond, but as with the Korean case there is now no evidence beyond coincidence and conjecture. Printing looks like one of those technologies, including farming, writing, and metallurgy, that arose independently in different places.

Still, despite the interruption of former trans-Eurasian contacts, some transmissions did happen across Eurasia, or substantial parts of it, in the fifteenth century by credible, documented means, via Islam. The Muslim world filled and to some degree bridged the gap between Europe and South and East Asia. Chinese and Indian artefacts, which became models for European imitators, arrived in European courts as diplomatic gifts with embassies from Muslim potentates. Porcelain is recorded in gifts from Egyptian rulers to European counterparts from 1442 onward. It is impossible to say how much of this material was either genuinely porcelain or genuinely Chinese: Factories in Samarkand and other centres produced imitations good enough to impress European clients. One way or another, however, porcelain or pseudo-porcelain objects, conveyed in embassies, could transmit images of Chinese origin to Europe. The effect on Western artists and their patrons did not take long to register. Lorenzo de' Medici accumulated fifty pieces, which he kept locked in his bedchamber.[46]

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[43] Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 225.

[44] Albert Kapr, "Gab es Beziehungen zwischen Johannes Gutenberg und Nikolaus von Kues?" *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 47 (1972): 32–40; Albert Kapr, *Johann Gutenberg: The Man and His Invention*, trans. Douglas Martin (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1966), 62–63.

[45] A century ago this was removed, for safekeeping, to Paris, where it was lost. T. Francis Carter and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread West-Ward* (New York: Ronald, 1955), 143–48, 218; Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, vol. 5, part 1, of *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 18, 304.

The Mamluk sultan Qā'it Bey, was perhaps the most important middleman between China and the West. Leonardo sought his patronage in the 1480s and was well placed to know the Chinese artefacts that had arrived among the sultan's diplomatic gifts. The embassy the Egyptian ruler sent to Florence in 1487 brought gifts that featured in paintings by other artists. Mantegna showed an interest in imitating Chinese porcelain from the 1450s, when he worked at the ducal court of Mantua, where some porcelain vessels were among the treasures of the Gonzaga dynasty. In an early depiction of a porcelain object in Western art, one of the magi in Mantegna's version of the epiphany of about 1499 holds a Ming wine cup, painted with blue flowers.[47] By the time Giovanni Bellini painted his *Feast of the Gods* in Ferrara in 1514, more porcelain had arrived in Venice with further Egyptian embassies in 1498 and 1508. He could include a copious set of blue-and-white china in casual use among the revellers—but perhaps the vessels in question were modeled on relatively inexpensive European or Islamic imitations of Chinese ware: If so, antique, early Ming designs inspired them.

The porcelain items that Qā'it Bey and his like sent to Europe introduced Westerners to Chinese painting, albeit of a specialized and limited kind. Muslim taste favored stylized floral motifs, and these are apparent in the samples that appear in Western paintings. No inventory, as far as we are aware, describes the materials in sufficient detail for us to know how wide a range of images was available to Western artists, and most European ceramicists imitated the widely available wares from the Islamic world. To judge, however, from the way European potters decorated their attempts to imitate porcelain in the fifteenth century, they had a wide range of examples at their disposal; the fairly frequent occurrence of Chinese motifs, especially dragons, in other arts suggests the same inference. A Florentine chest, or *cassone*, of 1448 has many Chinese motifs, including a cloud-dragon. If there was any direct Chinese impression on Renaissance artists' imagination, porcelain is the most likely medium for it. By the sixteenth century, Genoese craftsmen were producing good imitations of Ming porcelain, though by then direct contact with China had reopened by way of the Cape route across the Indian Ocean.[48]

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[46] R. E. Mack, *From Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 21–24; P. Burke, *Hybrid Renaissance* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016).

[47] Mack, *From Bazaar to Piazza*, 105.

Part III: Dissemination and Reception of the Renaissance

Innovation is usually the result of either social change or encounters with other cultures. In the case of the Renaissance, the urbanization of Europe was making the example of urban cultures such as Rome and Athens more relevant to Europeans than it had been. We have already seen what Renaissance art, literature, and ideas owed to other cultures, especially the world of Islam. It is time to examine the extent to which and the ways in which the Renaissance and its products spread beyond Europe.

Both people and things played important parts in the process of dissemination. Travelers, missionaries, conquerors, settlers, works of art, and other objects of material culture transmitted ideas and images. By a remarkable coincidence, the ocean-spanning reach of European navigations came just at the moment when the printing industry was beginning to boom in the voyagers' homelands. Books bore explicit ideas; engravings could transmit thinking implicitly and acquaint people who had never met a European with the themes, techniques, and content of Western art, which captured attention and imagination in regions it had never previously reached and among peoples whom it had never previously touched.

Translation, Hybridity

Much of what was transmitted changed in the course of transmission, whether consciously adapted or misunderstood. Hence scholars have come to speak of the spread and "reception" of the Renaissance in terms of domestication, syncretism, hybridity, cultural translation, and creolization. These concepts have cast so much light on the problems of how cultural (or, more specifically, intellectual and artistic) movements happen that it seems possible in principle that they may illuminate the origins of the Renaissance.

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[48] Robert Finlay, "The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History," *Journal of World History* 9 (1998): 141–87; Richard A. Goldthwaite, "The Economic and Social World of Italian Renaissance Maiolica," *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989): 13–27; S. Pierson, *From Object to Concept: Global Consumption and the Transformation of Ming Porcelain* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).

Students of the origins of religions, languages, fashions, artistic movements, technologies, cuisines, and ideas have successfully applied similar models of how diverse influences from mutually distinct cultures converge creatively.[49] The idea of cultural hybridity, or *métissage*, *mestizaje*, or *mestiçagem*, is one of the rare successes of what is sometimes called "Southern Theory," produced on the cultural periphery, in Havana, for instance, or Recife, and later adopted by the center, in Paris and New York. The systematic study of this domain goes back to scholars working on Afro-American cultures in the Caribbean and Brazil from the early twentieth century, among them Gilberto Freyre, Fernando Ortiz, and Alejo Carpentier, the last being the author of an important study of music in Cuba, which discusses the interaction of musical cultures on the island as early as the sixteenth century. Carpentier noted the survival, after the Spanish conquest, and even the employment in church music, of indigenous instruments such as the *maraca* (a rattle made from gourds containing seeds) and the *güiro* (a ribbed gourd that is scraped with a stick).[50]

In the last generation, the older language of hybridity has been increasingly replaced by a linguistic model, and cultural historians, like anthropologists, now speak of "cultural translation," when what is adopted from one culture is also adapted to suit the needs of the other. One advantage of this model is that it offers more space for human agency, for the work and the skills involved in the process of translation.

In an incisive account of the consequences of cultural encounters, the American anthropologist Marshall Sahlins distinguished between two stages of the process.[51] In the first stage, the cultural order absorbs new elements in fragmentary form, so that we might speak of localization, or "indigenization." In a second stage, after a critical threshold is passed, the cultural order is itself transformed. It is at this point that some scholars speak about creolization—in other words, the emergence of a new grammar for a new order. In this context another term from linguistics may be useful. Students of language contact speak of "convergence," both at the level of individual words and that of entire languages. In the case of lexical development, two similar words become one, combining the meanings of the original two. Whole languages also come to resemble each other more closely after contact. In the case of other forms of culture, too, we might speak of perceived affinities leading to convergence.

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[49] P. Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); S. Gruzinski, *Painting the Conquest* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), emphasizes hybridization in New Spain.

[50] A. Carpentier, *Music in Cuba* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[51] Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981); Marshall Sahlins, "Colors and Cultures," *Semiotica* 26 (1976): 1–22.

A remarkable case of intellectual hybridity—though some scholars prefer other terms—is that of the "Inca humanist," Garcilaso de la Vega, whose mother was an Inca princess, while his father was a Spanish *conquistador*. Garcilaso grew up in Peru but emigrated to Spain. He absorbed much of the culture of the Italian Renaissance, and his library included books by Ficino and Bembo as well as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Castiglione's *Courtier*. His history of Peru before the coming of the Spaniards expressed his nostalgia for the lost empire of the Incas. He used the language or languages of Western humanism, from philology to Neoplatonism, to refute the Spanish claims that the Amerindians were barbarians and idolaters. He claimed that the inhabitants of Peru already believed in one God before the arrival of the Spaniards. His history implied that Peruvian culture fit the pattern of the ancient theology discussed by Ficino and others. Neoplatonists had a cult of the sun, but the sun was also worshipped in Peru. In this way one form of syncretism, between pagan and Christian cultures in the first centuries after Christ, was used to justify another.[52]

Spaniards wanted to bring the look of Renaissance to the New World, following the designs of Serlio, for instance, or decorating façades with medallions and grotesques. Vitruvian town planning and architectural precepts stamped the hemisphere with urban grids and speckled it with stoa and pediments. Indeed, it has been argued that the classical style of architecture played a political role in Spanish America because it both represented and reinforced the European sense of cultural superiority.[53] The many new cities in the Americas often followed the regular grid plan recommended in Renaissance treatises on architecture which were difficult to achieve in the old cities of Europe.

However, regular city plans were also part of local traditions, as in the case of Tenochtitlan, over which Mexico City was built, and military camps—also, perhaps, influential models in the minds of founders of early colonial towns—were generally laid out on a grid pattern. Conversely, so it has been argued, Albrecht Dürer's plan for a symmetrical ideal city was influenced by what he knew about Tenochtitlan. The rational plan suggested associations with classical antiquity in the minds of European beholders and readers, while the lake-bound site of Tenochtitlan recalled Venice. Both echoes resonated in representations of the Aztec city in European books and engravings in the sixteenth century.[54] Plans were extemporized by *conquistadores* or—in his capacity as the least uneducated person present—a priest; they were not usually, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the work of professionals. Though from the 1570s the crown repeatedly issued ordinances endorsing it, the grid pattern seems to have come almost unreflectingly to untutored minds. Pizarro, who could barely read, designed Lima himself, as a grid of 137 symmetrically arrayed blocks. Cuzco was exceptional in retaining its pre-conquest street plan, but the image of the colonial grid was so powerful that when the engravers of *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* depicted the city, they stamped it, erroneously, with the common pattern. To Brazil in 1549 with Tomé de Sousa, governor of Salvador de Bahia, came numerous artisans who developed the city, confined by the surrounding topography, in a triangular but grid-like layout. In 1554, barely a generation after the conquest, a guidebook to Mexico City, written in impeccably Ciceronian Latin, praised the main square as the "forum" and the nascent university as the "House of Apollo, Minerva, and the Muses."[55]

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[52] J. A. Mazzotti, *Incan Insights: El Inca Garcilaso's Hints to Andean Readers* (Madrid: Iberoamerica, 2008); G. Bailey, *The Andean Hybrid Baroque* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), emphasizes the local contribution to the mixture of architectural styles; D. Brading, "The Incas and the Renaissance: The Royal Commentaries of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 18 (1985): 1–23, discusses Garcilaso's double heritage.

[53] V. Fraser, "Architecture and Imperialism in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America," *Art History* 9 (1986): 325–35; V. Fraser, *The Architecture of Conquest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Distinctions naturally need to be drawn between the impacts of the Renaissance in Africa, Asia, and America. In the New World classical learning shaped Europeans' perceptions of what they encountered and the way they behaved in response.[56] Fernández de Oviedo and Acosta both followed the model of Pliny in their natural histories of the Indies. Pietro Martire and João de Barros both entitled their histories "Decades" in homage to Livy, implicitly comparing the rising Spanish and Portuguese empires with that of Rome. Knowledge of Greek and Roman paganism occluded missionaries' understanding of indigenous religions, few, if any, of which were best understood as enshrining pantheons of personal deities each with responsibility for his or her own department of nature. The grammars of non-European languages—Nahuatl, Quechua, or Tupí—produced by missionaries with a humanist training followed the model of Latin grammars, despite the structural differences between those languages and Latin. Latin schools were established in Mexico City, in Michoacán, and most famous of all, in Tlatelolco. Some of the masterpieces of Renaissance literature, notably *Utopia* and *Don Quixote*, were well known in the New World.[57] Some humanists arrived from Spain, among them Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, who taught at the newly founded university in Mexico City in the middle of the sixteenth century. Humanist academies were founded on the European model, notably the Academia Antártica in Lima in the 1590s. Contributions to Renaissance literature were also made in the New World. Petrarch's lyrics were translated into Spanish in Peru, and a member of the Academia Antártica, Diego Dávalos y Figueroa, published poems in a Petrarchan style. The Spanish poet Alonso de Ercilla wrote his famous epic, the *Araucana*, in South America, describing the resistance to the Spaniards by the indigenous people of Chile (then a remote part of the viceroyalty of Peru) and presenting this resistance in a heroic style inspired by both classical epic and Ariosto. Gaspar de Villagrá began his epic on the conquest of New Mexico with the words "Arms and the heroic man I sing."[58]

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[54] David Y. Kim, "Uneasy Reflections: Images of Venice and Tenochtitlan in Benedetto Bordone's 'Isolario,'" *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 49–50 (2006): 80–91.

[55] Fraser, "Architecture and Imperialism," 325–35; Fraser, *Architecture of Conquest*; F. Fernández-Armesto, "Latin America" in *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, ed. P. Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), chap. 20.

[56] D. P. Abbott, *Rhetoric in the New World: Rhetorical Theory and Practice in Colonial Spanish America* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996).

Until quite recently, it was assumed that there was nothing to say about the Renaissance in Africa, except perhaps for the ill-documented work that Portuguese craftsmen put into the building of a new palace for the ruler of Kongo in the early sixteenth century. But "Afro-Portuguese" ivories echoed themes prominent in Europeans' minds. Hence, African craftsmen might be said to have participated in the Renaissance without knowing that they were doing so.[59]

In East Asia, Jesuits brought the Renaissance along with the Counter-Reformation. (In Europe, by contrast, Italian Protestants brought the Renaissance along with the Reformation!)[60] The many studies of the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci make it abundantly clear that he introduced Chinese mandarins to Renaissance rhetoric, astronomy, geography, and the art of memory, as well as to ancient philosophy.

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[57] Silvio Zavala, *Sir Thomas More in New Spain* (London: Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Councils, 1955); Irving A. Leonard, *Books of the Brave* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[58] Miguel Encinias, Alfred Rodríguez, and Joseph P. Sánchez, eds. *Historia de la Nueva México, 1610* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 1.

[59] William Fagg, *Afro-Portuguese Ivories* (London: Batchworth, 1959); E. Bassani and W. B. Fagg, *Africa and the Renaissance: Art in Ivory* (New York: Center for African Art, 1988).

[60] For the global Counter-Reformation, see Simon Ditchfield, "Catholic Reformation and Renewal," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Reformation*, ed. P. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 152–85.

The Jesuits' approach to scholarship may have contributed even to the important *kaozheng* 考證 philological movement.[61] As in Mexico and Peru, Jesuits imported religious prints into China, and as art historians going back to Münsterberg have pointed out, these prints made a considerable impact on Chinese art, on landscape painting in particular. Chinese landscape painters did not imitate Western models, but awareness of an alternative to their own tradition helped them to innovate.[62]

In Japan, the penetration of both Christianity and Renaissance culture was deeper than in China. Francis Xavier arrived with religious images and noted that they helped awaken interest in Christianity. Another Jesuit, the Italian Antonio Valignano, founded colleges at Arima (now part of Minabi Shinamara) and Azuchi. As in Mexico, Ciceronian Latin was taught in these colleges, using local editions of classical texts. Painting and engraving were also taught there. Some secular as well as religious paintings followed the models provided by European prints, including a screen with a battle scene based on a print of Lepanto.

The New World registered so much of the impact of the Renaissance because it was easy to reach from Europe, and because many or most indigenous cultures were hospitable to strangers and their ideas. The relative importance of the Renaissance in Spanish America owed a good deal to the Spanish expatriates who were trying to reproduce their home culture in their new home, whereas in most of Asia, outside the Philippines and a few relatively defensible enclaves, Europeans were present on sufferance and more or less at the mercy of indigenous states, with only selective opportunities to change the prevailing programs in aesthetics or education. East Asia, remote and hard of access, was harder to permeate owing to indigenous contempt for Western barbarians. But unless and until their European guests offended them by excesses of zeal or arrogance, Chinese and Japanese elites were disposed to welcome such useful knowledge and ideas as the Westerners were able to display. The missionaries believed that they had converted these elites to Christianity, but scholars who have studied the indigenous sources for this cultural encounter suggest that for both Chinese and Japanese "converts," the new ideas joined Buddhist and Confucian traditions, rather than replacing them, in a polytropic multiplicity. Hence they speak of "Confucian-Christian syncretism," for instance, and point out that the late Ming period, in the course of which the Jesuits founded their mission, was "the heyday of syncretism in China" in which Judaism and Islam as well as Christianity were viewed through Confucian spectacles.[63] Something similar occurred in art, where Western forms were assimilated into the traditional order of painting, whether consciously or as a result of the "habitus," the embodied knowledge of the artists, a knowledge that was so much part of them as to have become unconscious.

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[61] Spence, *Memory Palace*; Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 46–81.

[62] J. Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), emphasizes the "convergence" between local and Western traditions. M. Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), provides broad context.

The Islamic World

The world of Islam was different, influencing European culture but responding only very selectively to its allure. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, half in and half out of Europe, the evidence is particularly rich, and it has been studied intensively. As we have seen, Sultan Mehmed II shared the Renaissance interest in ancient Roman models of government. We now know that the sultan was not only the conqueror of Constantinople but also a patron of Italian artists such as Costanzo da Ferrara, who made a portrait medal of the sultan, and Gentile Bellini, who painted his portrait in oils. When Mehmet the Conqueror began construction of the Topkapı Saray—his monumental palace complex—he tried to get leading Italian architects onto his payroll, including Filarete, who advocated ancient Roman models as the means of building an ideal city, and Michelozzo, who designed the Medici palace in Florence. The Greek humanist George of Trebizond and the Florentine humanist Francesco Berlinghieri were among those who dedicated books to Mehmed, who, in turn, showed interest in some classical texts, among them Ptolemy's geography and the histories written by Herodotus, Livy, and Quintus Curtius, the biographer of another conqueror, Alexander the Great. Ottoman rather than European expansion led to cultural encounters and exchanges, although the examples cited in this paragraph show the Turks as receiving Renaissance culture rather than contributing to it.[64]

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[63] Jacques Gernet, *Chine et christianisme. Action et réaction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tinyun, Confucian and Christian in Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Ikuo Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[64] Julian Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox: Mehmed the Conqueror as a patron of the arts," *Oxford Art Journal* 5 (1982): 3–8.

Mehmed's successors were less oriented toward Italy, but Bayezid (to whom Leonardo once offered his services) invited Michelangelo to Istanbul, while in the earlier part of his reign, in the 1530s, Suleiman the Magnificent, encouraged by his grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha, was a patron of Renaissance art, including a crowned helmet that he commissioned from a workshop in Venice and tapestries made by Flemish weavers who came to Istanbul for the purpose.[65]

Much less is known about Safavid Persia, but we learn from recent research that the artist Kamāl al-Dīn Behzād copied Costanzo da Ferrara's drawing of a seated scribe, turning him into an artist in the process. The traveler Pietro Della Valle recorded seeing Italian paintings for sale in the city of Isfahan. The seventeenth-century painter Muḥammad-zamān ibn Ḥājī Yusūf of Qom made use of Renaissance prints.[66]

Mughal India was the farthest from Europe of the three gunpowder empires but it was also the one with the most intensive cultural contacts with the West, especially in the time of the emperor Akbar.[67] Jesuits gave Akbar paintings and engravings, and Akbar ordered his artists to copy them. They colored the prints and employed elements from them in their own work. For example, the miniature painter Basawan, Akbar's favourite, adapted prints by Dürer. Jahangir, Akbar's son, delighted in his copyists' ability to replicate European images accurately enough to confuse European visitors. The Jesuits introduced Renaissance architecture into India, where Serlio enjoyed an "afterlife," like Vitruvius in Mexico.

There are even traces of humanism to be found in Mughal India. In 1586, for instance, a Florentine merchant in Cochin found a copy of Castiglione's *Courtier* for sale there.[68] The Jesuit press—starting in Goa, where operations began in 1556, and spreading beyond India with similar initiatives in Macau in 1581, Nagasaki in 1592, and the Philippines from 1593—concentrated on devotional books and translations of Christian materials into native languages, but it also produced contributions to the humanist curriculum, including a digest of philosophy attributed to St Francis Xavier and a Japanese version of Aesop's *Fables*.

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[65] Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleiman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 401–2; Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion, 2000), 63–131.

[66] Eleanor Sims, "The European Print Sources of Paintings by the Seventeenth-Century Persian Painter Muhammad-Zaman ibn Haji Yusuf of Kum," in *Le stampe e la diffusione delle immagini*, ed. Henri Zerner (Bologna: CLUEB, 1979), 73–83.

[67] G. Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580–1630* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1998), discusses hybridity in Mughal painting; M. Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting* (Cambridge, 1992), is a general survey.

[68] Filippo Sassetti, *Lettere*, ed. Ettore Marcucci (Florence: Le Monnier, 1855), n. 102.

On the fringes of the Mughal Empire and beyond it to the east, scattered Portuguese dwellers from Cambay to Melaka and Macao built houses and churches that echoed classicizing features of the architecture of home. In the Philippines, in the relatively small enclaves Spaniards settled, a world more like that of Spanish America took shape. Spaniards could found their own institutions of humanistic education and impose European-style townscapes on the land. Along with Catholicism, they introduced church music in Renaissance style. However, as often happens, what was intended by the Spaniards to be cultural transfer turned out in practice to be more like cultural exchange. The conversion of the Filipinos was accompanied by the "philippinization" of Christianity, while in the case of music, according to a recent study, the Jesuit strategy of accommodation "ensured the incorporation . . . into church music" of song in local languages. Indigenous musicians learned Western music from Spaniards and then passed on what they had learned, probably adapting it without knowing that they were doing so, while some indigenous genres were retained "under the guise of hispanization."[69]

The images distributed through the networks developed during the Renaissance did not themselves all incorporate the visual innovations of the Renaissance. One of the most frequently and widely distributed, owing to Jesuit enthusiasm, was Rome's Madonna with Child known as the *Salus Populi Romani*. Versions of this icon, medieval if not Lucan in origin, reached the Americas, Africa, India, and China, having been broadcast despite—or perhaps because of—its archaism. Even images of the Trinity depicted as three identical Jesus-like triplets, once suppressed in Europe, emerged in Ethiopia and the Americas owing to their expressive iconography rather than for any Renaissance naturalism. In some cases the more Renaissance images were less welcome. The archpriest Avvakum complained of imported images of Jesus "making his face plump, his lips red, his hair curly, his arms thick and muscular, and his legs likewise, and altogether they make him look like a German, only that he lacks a sword at the hip"; his hostility to Italian-German naturalism was not so unusual.[70]

The main theme that emerges from our attempt at a bird's-eye view of the process is the importance of hybridization. In the case of painting and sculpture, a byproduct of missionary endeavors to convert the

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[69] D. R. M. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2010.

[70] Avvakum, *The Life of the Archpriest Avvakum*, trans. Jane Harrison and Hope Mirrlees (London: Hogarth, 1924), 23.

Indians and to sustain their devotion was what has been described as an "invasion of European images." It began with the import of European religious prints and was followed by the arrival of European painters and finally the rise of local artists working in a hybrid style and creating their own local forms (as in the Peruvian paintings of angels carrying guns). At the Mughal court, for instance, images of Christian saints and angels were used "to proclaim a message based on Islamic Sufi and Hindu symbolism and linked with Persian poetic metaphor."[71]

Examples of Western art arrived in Japan before they arrived in China. Early in the 1560s, the queen of Portugal sent a painting of the Virgin Mary to a Japanese nobleman (*daimyō*). In the 1580s, an Italian missionary, Giovanni Niccolò, established an academy in Nagasaki to train Japanese Christians to paint in the Western style. He also taught the art of engraving. Painted screens that represented the Europeans, known as "Southern Barbarians" (*Nanban*), paying particular attention to details of their costume and their ships, became fashionable in Japan around the year 1600.[72]

In China, examples of Western art were introduced by the missionaries. Ricci brought paintings in the Western style to Beijing, but a greater impact was made by Western engravings including illustrations of the Gospels, the famous atlas of Ortelius, and the views of cities collected in the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. The subsequent changes in Chinese landscape paintings have been described as "a convergence of old Chinese practice and response to foreign stimuli."[73] The European engravings impressed the Chinese because, as one Jesuit wrote in a letter to Rome, they were "considered very artistic and subtle because they make use of shadows, which do not exist in Chinese painting." With their strong *chiaroscuro*, the engravings reminded some Chinese artists of landscapes painted during the Northern Song dynasty. These affinities led to a revival of the Northern Song style—with a difference, due to the new awareness of alternatives to Chinese traditions. Both Chinese and Japanese artists resisted Western perspective until the eighteenth century, remaining faithful to their traditional, more fluid forms of representing space.

In New Spain, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were themselves metamorphosed. Mural paintings, for instance, might refer both to classical and local traditions, as in the case of the house of the Dean of Puebla, decorated with mural paintings of monkeys and female centaurs.[74] In architecture, the Spaniards made few concessions to local tradition. Indeed, it has been argued that the revived classical style both represented and reinforced the Spaniards belief that their culture was superior to that of the Aztecs and Incas. All the same, some churches were built on the site of earlier temples and even used the same stones, as in the case of the cathedral of Cusco, built from 1559 onward on the ruins of the temple known as Kiswarkancha, or in Diego de Landa's great friary-church at Izamal, where the glyphs on recycled stones can still be seen in the cloister.

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[71] Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind* (London: Routledge, 2002); Bailey, *Jesuits*, 35.

[72] Yoshitomo Okamoto, *The Nanban Art of Japan* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1972).

[73] Cahill, *Compelling Image*, 91.

In Mexico and Peru, the masons and sculptors were mainly indigenous. They probably had their own traditions, their own habitus (although we cannot be sure that they had worked as masons and sculptors before they were trained by the colonizers). As a result, the sculpture on church façades of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the New World, especially Peru, may have been classical in its syntax but it was partly indigenous in its lexicon—in other words, the converse of the *media lengua* of Ecuador. In the sixteenth century the combination of local and imported motifs is already visible. However, it was in the seventeenth century that a distinctive Peruvian style or ecotype emerged, which some art historians have named the *estilo mestizo*, and others "hybrid baroque."[75] This hybrid style includes local items such as pumas on church façades as well as a tendency to decorate surfaces more fully and in a flatter manner than in the European architecture of the time, as if the artisans had translated designs from indigenous textiles into stone. A famous example of the style is the Jesuit church in Arequipa, known as La Compañía.

The emergence of this *estilo mestizo* may have been encouraged by the Jesuits, whose missionary strategy in different parts of the world, from China to Peru, was that of "accommodating" Christianity to local tradition. Hybridity is often the result of accommodation, a term that has recently come into use in linguistics, or more exactly come back into use, since ancient Roman rhetoricians already used the term.

The hybrid style of Peru may also have been encouraged by the interpenetration of Christian and Muslim cultures in medieval Spain, divided as it was into Christian and Muslim kingdoms. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, in Toledo, for instance, Alcalà, and elsewhere in Spain, some Christian churches were decorated by Arab artisans in the so-called *mudejar* style, with geometrical and calligraphic motifs of the kind to be found in mosques. It might therefore be suggested that Spanish colonial patrons of architecture were prepared by their experience in the peninsula to favor or at least to accept a mixture of European with indigenous artistic traditions.

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[74] Serge Gruzinski, *La pensée métisse* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 112–16.

[75] Bailey, *Andean Hybrid Baroque*, favours the idea of hybridization; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), is suspicious of the concept.

It remains an open question whether decorations such as these, like the façades of churches from Arequipa to Goa, represent conscious artistic syncretism or whether they are the unintended consequence of asking local craftsmen to follow European models that were unfamiliar to them. However, similar points may be made about European artefacts, from statues to texts, many of which combined elements from medieval and classical or from Christian and pagan traditions.

Conclusion

Several important general themes emerge from this survey. One is the role of missionaries in introducing the Renaissance as well as Christianity to the world beyond Europe. They brought religious images because of their content, but these images provoked interest on account of their style. The medium was part of the message. Missionaries are "cultural interpreters," though they vary in their methods. For example, the Jesuit policy of "accommodation" to local cultures was criticized by rival orders such as the Dominicans who feared the dangerous degradation of elements of the faith necessary to the convert's salvation.

Another recurrent theme is the important role of prints, which were easy to export in large numbers, in spreading the knowledge of Renaissance art. Vital, of course, were the contexts that made possible the long-range reception of culture of European origin: exploration, unprecedentedly far-flung empires, widening circles of trade, the increasing mobility of travelers, migrants, sojourners and armies, and the technologies that made non-Europeans respect Western wisdom. It is hard, for example, to imagine China or Japan or some Southeast Asian states evincing enthusiasm for ignorant, poor, smelly barbarians without the attractions of Jesuit cartography and astronomy. But whether carried by war or wares, imperialism or example, and however modified by hybridity, the Renaissance was an unprecedentedly far-reaching movement. The impact of the Renaissance on much of the rest of the world was abundant—thin, of course, in most of the places it touched, but, in some areas, transforming. Similarly, the impact of the rest of the world on the Renaissance was real and, in some areas, decisive.

If the Renaissance was global in its effects, the question of how far afield to trace its origins is harder to answer. It was anomalous by the standards of comparable earlier and later movements because it occurred at a time of attenuated trans-Eurasian contacts, with little or no input from east and south Asia. It is not possible to discern in the making of the Renaissance, on a similar scale, the obvious input from far afield that helped to stimulate innovations in the first millennium B.C.E., for example, or the high Middle Ages, or the Enlightenment.

Nevertheless, the Renaissance was a hybrid of European initiatives with transplantations of extra-European culture that originated in or passed through the Islamic world. Further impact—albeit slow and modest in effect—from the Americas and Africa helped shape the development of the movement in the sixteenth century. In the period of the making of the Renaissance, Europe was not conquered by a host of influences from outside. Rather, a threadbare series of stragglers penetrated the heartland, mostly from not very far afield, and made important but hardly decisive contributions.

In the case of the visual arts, at least, a provisional conclusion might be that Western culture had actually been more open to exotic influences in the Middle Ages than it was in the Renaissance, both during the period of Europe's relative isolation from the 1360s to the 1490s, and even during the "high" Renaissance of the early sixteenth century, when the ideal of classicism (the "grammar" of architecture, for instance) increased the obstacles to hybridization, which smacked of impurity. To note one example, an analysis of possible cases of Mexican influence on the decoration of the loggia at the Vatican by Raphael and his workshop concluded that Aztec art was too alien to assimilate.[76] All the same, not the least advantage of viewing the Renaissance from a global perspective is to make more visible instances of hybridization that were important at both ends of the process, but have come to be recognized only quite recently.

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[76] Nicole Dacos, "Présents américains à la Renaissance: L'Assimilation de l'exotisme," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 73 (1969): 57–62.

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