

# Junior Docent Review Notes, Spring (March) 2016

## Group 1: Birth of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism in India

Mark Catron, Sara Wagner, Bill Wilson, and Beth Germick

### **Notes:**

#### **Birth of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism in India**

Although ancient secular art existed in India, most of the art that has been preserved comes from the religious traditions that emerged from the cradle of the Indus valley region and the Vedic beliefs. Lasting from 1500 BCE through to 322 BCE, the Vedic religion emerged from the early days of the Aryan migration into northwest India from Persia, that brought with them religion based on the worship of many gods and goddesses. This ancient religion is depicted in collections of oral poetry and prose known as the "Vedas". These ideas formed the foundational writings of three major religions in India, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, and spawned the ideas of enlightenment to understand the world order, a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and the caste system. Art from the Vedic period is limited but we see its influence in the art of all three subsequent philosophies where it is used in religious practice for worship and devotion to the gods. Symbolism in gesture, posture, and attribute contains many levels of meaning and aids in visualization of the gods. We will discuss the salient qualities of those three religions, beginning with Buddhism.

#### **Buddhist Art at its Beginning**

Standing Buddha, Gandhara (Afghanistan), 3rd Century # 2000.153

2500 years ago 35-year-old Siddhartha Gautama renounced the material life and achieved Enlightenment with these Four Noble Truths: 1. life is suffering; 2. suffering is caused by ambition and craving; 3. suffering can be overcome and happiness attained by renouncing craving and living in the moment; 4. the eight-fold path of right thinking and actions and developing compassion for others will allow us all to escape *samsara* and achieve *Nirvana*. The Buddha left his sermons in the form of sutras that were recorded by his monastic followers.

#### **Buddhism:**

- has no deities (the Buddha taught a path to *personal* enlightenment from his own experience)
- is tolerant of other religions and philosophies
- has never inspired wars, conquests, crusades or efforts at conversion
- is a way of life rather than a religion
- provides a path to a moral life
- is a love of wisdom, compassion and understanding

#### **Buddhist Art:**

It was 600 years after the death of Shakyamuni Buddha before his image was first carved and painted to inspire his followers.

This Buddha from 3rd century Gandhara is special for two reasons: it is one of the first images of the Buddha ever produced; and it shows a remarkable, western, classical influence that was soon abandoned in favor of images that were more based upon the *yakshas*, the indigenous nativist deities of southern India.

Buddhist images are distinguished by physical attributes which are meant to depict symbolically the spiritual qualities and lessons of the Buddha: elongated earlobes, urna, ushnisha, elongated arms, peaceful countenance, chakras on palms and feet, lotus seat, etc., as well as by the mudras, or hand signals that every Buddhist will recognize. The form of the Buddha has changed dramatically according to the local customs and tastes of other cultures, but...

...most importantly, for a Buddhist the image signifies a religious experience for *both* the creator and the observer. Creating the image is an important act of compassion and critical element of the Buddha journey; viewing the image is also part of the journey, a reminder of the importance of life in the moment, and the peace and love within ourselves. The devout do NOT worship, make sacrifices or ask for favors, as in other religions; bowing to the statue is an expression of gratitude for the teaching, not devotion.

*Transition: Historically, around the time of the life of the Shakyamuni Buddha there also lived, in a land nearby, Mahavira, the 24th in a line of "pathfinders" who created another major religion, Jainism.*

### **Jainism in India**

#### ***Seated Jina, 1108CE, 98.211***

Of the three great and ancient religions of India, Jainism is the least known and now the smallest with about 0.5 % of India's current population. It is estimated there are about 6 million Jains in the world today. In India, the area in and around Gujurat in western India has the largest percentage of Jains.

Adherents to Jainism (or "Jains") follow principles of Mahavira (599-527 BCE) , who not the founder of Jainism but the 24<sup>th</sup> tirthankara (pathfinder) who followed and helped make others aware of the principles of Jainism that we know today.

Jains are most known for severe asceticism and, like Mahavira, renounce violence and dishonesty, and embrace chastity and liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death. Undue attention may be given by others to the "sky clad" sect which renounces all clothing. A strict vegetarian or vegan diet is often mentioned as a way to show nonviolence to all animals, especially those who might be harmed by careless farming practices.

**Jainist Art:** Jainist temples can be large or small, with or without a dome, extremely plain or highly decorated. Often there is an icon or statue of a main god inside. A seated or standing Jina (one who has conquered physical and temporal desires) is a common subjects of Jainist art. Each Jina may show one or more sacred symbols or emblems – common are the circle or the swastika, not to be confused with other 20<sup>th</sup> Century nefarious uses of the same.

Mia has a few Jainist art objects – a standing Jina, a seated Jina, and two narrative objects (one on cloth and one on paper) to illustrate a principle of Jainism and to aid the worshiper in meditation.

The seated Jina pictured here of highly polished black stone (98.211) from 1108 CE shows a nude Jina in a meditative position – one who has renounced passion and anger and serves as a guide for others who seek a life of nonviolence and respect for all living things.

*Transition: All three of the great ancient religions of India search for enlightenment and use art to light the path. Now that we have highlighted the smallest, we'll discuss the religion most common in India today, Hinduism.*

## Hinduism in India

### *Vishnu with Lakshmi and Sarasvati, 90.67*

The third religion we will be reviewing is Hinduism; which really took hold in India and became woven into the daily life of the Indian people. Even today, the majority of the Indian population call themselves Hindus. As this religion was spreading into India, deities from other religions were absorbed – such as Buddha. All deities are within the realm of this religion and can co-mingle with its roots from the Vedic culture.

Hinduism has no historical founder. Its authority rests instead upon a large body of sacred texts that provide Hindus with rules governing rituals, worship, pilgrimage, and daily activities.

Hinduism is full of stories and symbolism, as reflected in its ornamental, textural, and colorful art. Hindu art depicts a world infused with Divine Dynamism: Its forms are tactile, sensuous and radiant. Within Hinduism, there is a supreme being, referred to as Brahman. Brahman, is known as undifferentiated existence. There are thousands of Hindu deities, all associated with forces of nature.

### **Three principle deities:**

- Shiva: Destroyer, creator. He is often represented as Lord of the Dance, dancing the Cosmic Dance, the endless cycle of death and rebirth.
- Devi (also known as Shakti): The great goddess controls material riches and fertility.  
*Note: Within Hindu cosmos, male energy does not exist without female energy. The male god is powerless without female goddess.*
- Vishnu: Preserves and restores. When evil is overpowering, Vishnu restores natural order.

Mia is home to several Hindu objects. Here we see Vishnu with his wives, Lakshmi and Sarasvati, on either side. You will note that the goddesses wear very thin, diaphanous clothing.

All gods have vehicles – their feet do not touch the ground. Here we can see Vishnu's vehicle, the eagle Garuda – ½ man, ½ bird. If not using a vehicle, a god would be standing on a lotus pad.

No discussion about Hindu art is complete without mention of the Hindu Temples, which are essentially dwelling places for the gods. While a principle deity resides at the heart of each temple and is worshipped, other deities, attendants, and mythological creatures can be seen as part of the structure – both the interior and exterior of temples can be covered with such figures.

A key concept in the worship of Hindu deities is the act of making eye contact with the deity (darshan). Darshan is a two sided event: the worshiper sees the divinity, and the divinity likewise sees the devotee. It is believed that by having darshan with the god's image, one takes the energy that is given by the deity and receives blessings.

### **Conclusion:**

These three religions started in this defined area but spread rapidly throughout India and to the far reaches of Southeast Asia. We are lucky to have a number of items to represent these philosophies that are applicable for countless tours.

## Group 2: Early Imperial China: Qin, Han, and Tang Dynasties

Cathie Wemlinger, Brenda Haines, Joan Gilmore, Jung Wendeborn

### Notes:

#### Key Ideas:

The Qin, Han and Tang periods in early imperial China are characterized by ground-breaking technologies such as silk, paper, gunpowder, and ceramics; a sharing of these technologies with the rest of the world through trade on the Silk Road; and the protection of their dynasties through building initiatives such as the Great Wall and a canal linking north to south China.

Three religions dominated this time period: Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Objects placed in tombs evidenced their strong belief in an afterlife.

Because of standardized writing, currency and organizational bureaucracy, the culture flourished throughout upheavals and changes in government.

#### Objects:

- #1 Military Watchtower, 1st cent., 98.69a,b
- #2 Money Tree, 1st-2nd cent., 2002.47.a-rrr
- #3 Celestial Horse, 25-220 CE, 2002.45
- #4 Camels with Driver, 618-906, 2004.205.1.1,2

.

#### Object #1 –Military Watchtower

Presenter – Joan Gilmore

**Key Idea: We have no pieces from the Qin Dynasty, but first Emperor Ying Zheng's lifesize tomb warriors are familiar as an example of the incredible organization and accomplishments of this time period. Even though Zheng bankrupted his country making his lavish tomb, the organizational structures he created endured throughout all the imperial dynasties of this period. All of the pieces we will be showing are from tombs.**

Here is a military watchtower from a tomb in the 1st century. This tomb piece reflects the use of cross-bows, which the Chinese invented around the time of the Qin Dynasty. This superior technology, along with their other original technologies, made China a wealthy country and world superpower.

#### Object #2 – Money Tree

Presenter – Brenda Haines

**Key Idea: Social upheaval. Three religions. Chinese are still called "People of Han."**

The Qin Dynasty (221-209 B.C.): The beginning of "China" as a political entity

A dynamic leader named Qin Shi Huangdi brought an end to the ancient feudal era, unified the "warring states," and declared himself China's first emperor. The short lived Qin Dynasty was one of tremendous military expansion and the consolidation of many important elements of Chinese Society.

Significant developments include:

1. The linking and expansion of existing sections the Great Wall to create one continuous rampart (about 1,500 miles) to protect China's northern frontier;
2. Dispossession of feudal aristocracy;
3. Beginnings of centralized bureaucracy;
4. Standardized written language, weights and measures;
5. Canal and highway systems expanded (in total length the highway system is longer than that of the Roman Empire);
6. Emperor suppresses ancient Zhou culture and destroys artifacts;
7. Emperor builds vast places, the likes of which had never been seen;
8. Builds enormous tomb with 6,000 terra-cotta soldiers and horses, etc. (Realistic and life-sized sculpture had no previous antecedents in Chinese Culture.

### **Confucianism**

Confucius lived from 551-479 BC. The Confucian classics of ritual conduct were compiled during the Western Han dynasty (221 BC – AD 9) and included the Record of the Rites of Chou, The Book of Etiquette and Rules, and the Record of Rites. As these names suggest, Confucianism codifies a reverence for moral behavior modeled on proper behavior as evidenced by the past actions of venerable ancestors, and placed great importance on ritual ceremony. It also proposed that good behavior fosters good behavior in others: Moral leaders/moral subjects; moral parents/moral children.

### **The Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.): Eyes turned westward**

Spanning over four centuries, the Han Dynasty was the first of China's four great historical dynasties. The boundaries established by the Qin and regained/maintained by the Han have more or less defined the nation of China up to the present day.

Chang'an, the capital of Western Han (206 B.C. – 9 A.D.), was one of the two largest cities in the ancient world (the other being Rome.) After a brief period of factional dispute which interrupted the dynasty, the capital of Eastern Han (25-220A.D.) was moved to Luoyang.

**Significant developments include:**

1. Under Emperor Wudi (141-86 B.C.), Confucianism is established as the basis for correct official and individual conduct, and for the educational curriculum.
2. Bureaucratic Civil Service system becomes hallmark of Chinese government;
3. Diplomatic expedition west (138 B.C.) ignites public imagination and interest. Conquest of Ferghana (North of Afghanistan) and neighboring regions in 101 B.C. allows the Han to seize large number of "blood-sweating" heavenly horses for its imperial stable. "Celestial horses" become ubiquitous in Han era art.
4. Trade routes to the West develop that would come to be known as the "Silk Road."
5. Scientific and technological advances include papermaking, the use of negative numbers in mathematics, and the raised relief map.
6. Fantastic lore occupies the popular mind. Shamans, magicians, and oracles roam the capital. Good omens include white unicorns, phoenixes, flying horses, red wild geese, stones from the sky, mysterious rays of light, and other strange things. Daoists roam the hillsides in search of "spirit fungus" to gain immortality.

7. Diverse, often opposing elements – native and foreign, Confucian and Daoist, courtly and popular - give Han art both its vigor and immense variety in its styles and subject matter.
8. During the Eastern Han (25-220 A.D.) China makes contact with Japan for first time. Indian culture also reaches the capitol and Buddhism is introduced into China. (Art combines images from multiple philosophies.)
9. Earliest Chinese monumental stone sculpture dates from this period. (China comes late to stone carving and objects are relatively crude.)
10. By Eastern Han, the practice of furnishing tombs with art has spread to all who can afford it. A wide variety of objects including servants, guards, farmhands, musicians, jugglers, barns and animals, watchtowers, and watchdogs, are produced. A few are hand modeled but the majority are mass-produced in molds. Bronze figures are some of the most striking Han era relics.
11. Invention of paper helps development of calligraphy as an art form.
12. Golden age of lacquer as artistic medium.
13. Bronzes are generally more utilitarian or decorative than those of the Shang and the Zhou (suppressed and destroyed during the Qin Dynasty.) Exception is censor in the shape of a fairy mountain, often covered with reliefs of animals, trees, and hunters, with concealed perforations to emit smoke. (All nature is alive and “breathes.”)
14. Bronze mirrors continue traditions developed during the Warring States period. Coiled dragons, spirals, and astronomical symbols are common. TLV mirrors encompass Daoist cosmological principles.
15. Golden age of Jade carving. Large pebbles are hollowed out and made into toiletry boxes or bowls for eating and drinking. 3 dimensional “animal” figurines are created and discolorations are exploited for artistic purposes. Jade has begun to lose its ritual significance and has become the delight of the scholar and gentleman. However, it’s “preserving powers” leads members of imperial family to create jade burial suits.
16. Ceramics: varies enormously in quality. Grave wares are made of coarse pottery covered with lead glaze that oxidizes in the soil to produce a silvery-green iridescence. The finest ceramic ware produced at this time is a high-fired glazed stoneware which verges on porcelain.

The third century witnessed the collapse of social and political order in China, causing immense suffering and untold loss of life, not to mention the destruction of buildings and monuments. However, in the wake of this upheaval, the yoke of orthodox Confucianism, imposed by the Han government, was shattered, ushering in a period of free questioning and the unleashing of human imagination.

### **Daoism**

An ancient Chinese philosophy with roots going back to the Bronze Age, it was first articulated in the Tao-te-Ching, the classic text attributed to Lao-tzu (believed to have lived in the 6th century B.C., the same century during which Prince Siddhartha taught the first tenets of Buddhism in India and Confucius developed his theories of family and state organization in China.)

Dao means road and is often translated as ‘the way.’ It is the path to achieving a state of enlightenment resulting in longevity or even immortality. But Dao can also be understood as a vision of cosmic universal order encompassing the primal energy (yuan-ch’i) composed of complementary, yet opposite forces known as yin and yang. The constantly shifting patterns of these forces explain all natural phenomena. To be content, a human being must live in harmony with the natural energies of the universe and accept the inevitability of change. Thus, Daoism stresses non-action or noninterference with the natural order of things.

While Confucianism emphasizes ritual conduct and the fixed hierarchies of family and state, Daoism focused primarily on the individual's relationship to nature. Daoism inspired the early development of landscape painting, nature poetry, garden culture and the literate arts in China.

Daoism came into its own in the 3rd and 4th Centuries after the fall of the Han Dynasty led to social collapse and political chaos. It was at this time that Daoism was transformed from a philosophy into a religion. A conglomeration of folklore, nature worship, and metaphysics, it developed into a full-fledged church, with a canon of scriptures, a hierarchy, temples, and all the trappings of a formal religion (copied from the Buddhists.).

There are many spirit beings, propitious symbols, and magical elements to religious Daoism. The Queen Mother of the West from the money tree is one example as is the King Father of the East, and the Perfect Warrior of the North. The Yin-Yang diagram, and the I-ching coin are others.

Notably, at this time, Daoists were constantly searching for an "elixir" that would grant long life or even immortality. Such experiments led to many new scientific discoveries such as 1) gunpowder, and 2) the techniques used for gilding Bronze Buddha sculptures with gold

In times of political and social chaos, Daoist intellectuals sought escape in poetry, music, calligraphy, the delights of conversation, and nature. Mountains were a place of spiritual retreat where one might encounter and converse with one of the "immortals."

### **The Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.): Golden age of cosmopolitan culture**

After 400 years of division and fragmentation following the collapse of the Han Dynasty in 220 A.D., China was once again unified under the Sui dynasty (581-618). The political and governmental institutions established during this brief period lay the foundation for the growth and prosperity of the succeeding Tang dynasty. Marked by strong and benevolent rule, successful diplomatic relationships, economic expansion, and cultural cross pollination, Tang China emerged as one of the greatest empires in the medieval world. The Tang is the second of China's four great historical dynasties.

#### **Significant developments include:**

1. Tang art has incomparable vigor, realism and dignity.
2. Atmosphere of religious tolerance and curiosity.
3. Grand canal system was built and trade along Silk Road flourished.
4. Size and splendor of the Tang capitals at Luoyang and Chang'an were legendary. Chan'an was the most cultivated metropolitan center in the world.
5. Cave shrines at Dunhuang were important sites of Buddhist art along Silk Road
6. Pure Land Buddhism: faithful promised place in the Western Paradise of the Amitabha ("Infinite Light" Buddha.) Guanyin, a bodhisattva of mercy, becomes popular. (Androgyny expressed universal form of love unlimited by issues of gender.)
7. Tradition of painting idealized portraits of royalty achieve classic form in Tang.
8. Towards end of Tang, Zen monk-artist flouted tradition by painting wildly, sometimes with hair or feet.
9. Zenith of Buddhism in China. By end of period, some criticized corruption and special privileges enjoyed by Buddhist community which had formed close relationship with

ruling class (mirroring church/state relationship in Europe at this time.) In 840's reaction led to persecution of Buddhists, the closing of temples, and defrocking of monks. Persecution only lasted a few years, but Buddhism never recovered its former status.

### **Object #3– Celestial Horse**

Presenter – Cathie Wemlinger

**Key Idea: Ferghana horse used on the Silk Road. Elaborate tombs. Evidence of international cross-fertilization is apparent in art and other aspects of the silk route cultures.**

### **Han Dynasty 206-220 A.D.**

Confucianism, which stresses the importance of moral standards and of a well-ordered society, became the philosophical basis of society and government. Unfair punishment was abolished and land taxes were reduced. Under the strong leadership of Emperor Wudi, China strengthened the government and economy as well as many cultural and intellectual achievements.

### **The Silk Road**

The Silk Road was formally established linking the regions of the ancient world in commerce. The name comes from the popularity of Chinese silk with the West, especially with Rome. The Silk Road's greatest value was the exchange of culture, art, religion, philosophy, technology, language, science, architecture, and other elements of civilization along with the goods carried from country to country.

### **Technology**

- Cast iron and steel, mass produced in government foundries, replaces bronze weapons and tools.
- Paper was invented around 105 A.D.
- Developing of lacquering and wide use of jade
- Advances in astronomy, magnetic compass invented, acupuncture was used for medicine
- The rudder for use on ships was invented and other useful devices like the wheelbarrow and fishing reel.

By the end of the Han Dynasty China had become a prosperous force in Asia

### **Celestial Horse**

1. This statue represents one of the heavenly horses from the Eastern Han dynasty. Its power is evident in its muscular form, arched neck and spirited expression.
2. Bronze horses such as this one were placed in elaborately furnished aristocratic tombs and were meant to provide transportation for the deceased in the afterlife. These "heavenly horses" were associated with dragons, animals capable of carrying humans to the land of the immortals.
3. Most large-scale bronze horses, such as this one, have come from Eastern Han tombs in Southwest China
4. Horses were highly prized in ancient China. The military and the elite wanted powerful horses for riding and pulling elaborate carriages. During the Han dynasty a superior breed of horses was discovered in the Ferghana Basin in Central Asia (modern Afghanistan). The Chinese recognized their great value and decided to obtain these horses through military force and trade along the Silk Road.

5. These horses were stronger, faster, and larger than any horse in China and they quickly became symbols of power and prestige. Because of their endurance and speed they were labeled heavenly horses and were thought to have divine powers. Unusual red foam on their skin also earned them the nickname blood-sweating horses. (Actually a parasite-caused skin condition produced the foam when the horses' blood mixed with their sweat.)
6. This horse was constructed of nine separately cast bronze sections. Traces of paint are evident around mouth, neck, mane, and belly.

The importance of horses rose to new heights in the Tang dynasty (618–907) when, as emblems of imperial power, they marched in state processions, galloped through royal hunting parks, raced across polo fields, and even danced before the emperor.

#### **Object #4 – Camels with Driver**

Presenter – Jung Sook Wendeborn

**Key Idea: Tang Dynasty was considered Golden Age of China. Sancai ware – 3-colored ceramics. Piece depicts foreigners with camels along the Silk Road. Exchange with rest of the world was at its peak. This is before China closed its doors to foreign exchange.**

#### **1. Giving key points of Tang Dynasty**

- Tang Dynasty (618-906) was considered Golden Age of China. It is generally regarded as a high point in Chinese civilization, a period of relative prosperity, political stability and intellectual freedom.
- Tang restored all the holdings claimed by earlier dynasties and extended them.
- A highly creative period of cultural activity and artistic excellence.
- Invention of gunpowder
- Silk Road began in China, with routes spreading across Asia into Europe.

#### **2. Introducing Mia object; Camels with Driver**

Tang records estimated the population by number of registered households at about 50 million people. With its large population base, the dynasty was able to raise professional and conscripted armies of hundreds of thousands of troops to contend with nomadic powers in dominating the lucrative trade routes along the Silk Road. This Mia object, Camels with Driver, depicts foreigners with camels along the Silk Road.

### **Group 3: Early Korea (ceramics) and Japan (Yayoi to Heian Period)**

Pat Gale, Gerri Reid Skjervold, Ann Romanczuk, and Jena Lange

#### **Notes:**

##### **Object # 1**

*Tall Stand with Perforated Vase*, 1st half 5th Century, Korea (G206) 2105.79.465

By Pat Gale

This vase is from the 3 Kingdoms period in Korea. The 3 Kingdom period which was from 57 BCE to 668 CE got its name from the 3 independent nation-states that emerged during this time.

This piece is a great example of this period because of the geometric perforations which were cut into the moist clay before firing and also because of the incised combed wave designs at the base. These perforations added drama and also lightened the weight of the vase. This particular piece with the alternating rectangular cut-outs is associated with the Silla kingdom.

Korean potters constructed wood-fired climbing kilns -a tunnel shaped structure built up the side of a hill that was capable of producing intense and steady heat, reaching temps around 1000 degrees centigrade. Because of these high temps potters were able to produce durable stoneware that was hard, dense and impervious to liquids.

Although they may have been used in homes, vessels with perforated stands are believed to primarily be used in tombs to hold food or liquid to nourish the spirit of the deceased and it is thanks to tomb findings we have examples of this pottery.

Another important development at this time was high fired glazes. At first the wood ash circulating in the kiln was an accident but soon ash glazes were produced deliberately and about the four century, these technical advancements were transferred to Japan through trade and the immigration of Korean artists.

## **Object #2**

*Amida Buddha* – 12th century, Japan. 78.20

By Ann Romanczuk

Now we will fast forward to the early 12th Century and move to Japan. Buddhism entered Japan in the sixth century, and the religions of Buddhism and Shinto became intimately intertwined there, with Shinto explaining the origins of the Japanese people, and Buddhism offering salvation after death. From our O'Riley text: "The Japanese have long assumed that religions should supplement and give strength to one another. Therefore, there is no inherent contradiction in paying allegiance to some or all of them."

This seated Amida Buddha in our collection is from the early 12th century, from the late Heian period. It is sculpted from Japanese cypress and has traces of gilding. It depicts the Amida Nyorai, the Buddha of Limitless Light, the compassionate, gentle deity who is the central redeemer of Pure Land Buddhist teaching. Pure Land Buddhism is even today the largest of the Buddhist sects in Japan. It is the only Buddhist tradition in which there is a belief in universal salvation. Rather than the rare few people in most Buddhist traditions who succeed in achieving enlightenment, Pure Land Buddhists believe that by saying the name of the Amida Buddha just once, a person will be greeted by him at the moment of death and transported to the Western Pure Land, which our Stokstad text describes as "a resplendent place filled with divine flowers and music . . . a land of bliss."

As with other depictions of the Buddha we have seen, his attributes include sitting in the lotus posture on the lotus leaf; elongated earlobes; the urna, which is the mark between his eyebrows; the snail coils on his head, because it was said that the snails climbed onto his head to cool him while he was

meditating; and his ushnisha, the topknot on his head which symbolizes his enlightenment. He holds his hands in the mudra of welcome.

Our original Amida Buddha, accession number 78.20 which was on your study sheet, was on display for the past 40 years, and just recently went to the conservation studio, and was replaced with this fine piece which is part of the splendid Mary Griggs Burke collection in our Asian galleries.

### **Object #3**

*Writing Box with Scenes from the "Morning Glory", "Picture Contest" and "Ivy" Chapters of the Tale of Genji* (G223) 2015.79.46a, b

By Jena Lange

The tale of Genji is regarded as the world's first novel and was written about 1000-1015CE. It contains 54 chapters and we meet roughly 400 characters as we read about the exploits of Prince Genji, his companions and lovers. The story continues into the next generation.

This is a "know your audience" type of literature. It was written by Lady Murasaki and illustrated by a group of women artisans. The target audience was the ladies-in-waiting group at the Emperor's court of whom Lady Murasaki was one.

When I say that this book had a definite audience, I mean the ladies of the court would have known the meanings of people's names, the matching flowers or nature setting. They would have known which lady in the picture would have ranked highest by the way she folded her robes or tilted her head.

The piece shown here is the accessories writing box that features scenes from 3 chapters of the Tale of Genji and shows the style of painting featured in the book – Yamato-e. The women artisans used the subtype – onna-e which fits the polite detachment the ladies of the court had as their demeanor when watching the real antics of the emperor's court.

The whole story is indicative of the underlying concepts of the Heian dynasty which were that the Heian court greatly valued refinement – reading, painting, writing, poetry and prose and that there were Buddhist beliefs that earthly pleasures were fleeting and that sadness was inevitable.

### **Object # 4**

*Deer Mandala of the Kasuga Shrine*, Muromachi Period 1392-1573, Nara, Japan (G220)

L2015.33.20

By Gerri Reid Skjervold

The five Buddhist deities of the Kasuga Shrine are depicted in this scroll. They are guardian deities of the Fujiwara "field of wisteria" family, a powerful 9-12th Century Japanese Dynasty.

After the 6th Century when Buddhism was introduced in Japan, the Japanese religion was linked to Buddhism by making Buddhist deities benevolent guardians (human form) to the Shinto Gods (spirit form, kami). Mandalas were created as visuals to reinforce the reconciliation of the two.

The five deities are enveloped by a golden circle. The white deer, considered a messenger of the divine spirit (kami) floats on a pink cloud and has transported the deities from the heavens on his lacquered saddle. A Japonica tree's trunk rises from the deer's back and shadowy wisteria flutter their way

downward. The composition is framed by lusciously rich patterns of golden foliage. Mountainous land above depicts Mount Mikasa featured with a dark sky, inlets of water and a golden moon.

To this day, deer roam freely in the Primeval Forest around and near the shrine where no hunting is allowed.

## **Group 4: Post-Contact Americas: Ancestral Puebloan, Inca, Aztec, Mississippian, and Chimú**

Bruce Robbins, Elizabeth Winga, Shelly McGinnis, Kathleen Steiger

### **Notes:**

#### **Introduction:**

- 1) This was a time of Power and Conquest and Trade
  - a. Empires were formed, conquered others, and then were conquered by the next Empire.
  - b. Trade proliferated between regions from the far north of North America through the Gulf of Mexico and on to South America.
- 2) Spiritual Powers were embodied in the leaders as well as animals and nature.
- 3) Large empires fostered workshops of artists that developed mastery in architecture and construction methods. They constructed grand monuments and cities as well as sculptures both large and small.

Objects are all in G260:

#### **Chimu Ear Spools, c. 1150-1450, Chimú (Peru), Gold alloy, 43.4.1**

- At the time these ear spools were made, precious metals were so plentiful on Peru's northern coast that personal ornaments worn by the elite had become large and ostentatious. Spools or Flares like the present example were worn by prominent Chimú men with big holes in their distended earlobes; the thick shafts in back—which are hollow—counterbalancing the weight of the frontals. The ornaments, surprisingly light weight considering their size, are worked on the front with complex multi-figured scenes.
- Chimú authorities broadcast their power and status by sporting luxurious attire like feather work, ornate headdresses, and precious jewelry. Only the most elite authority would have worn these gold ear spools. While gold was not valued as currency, its symbolic connection to the sun gave it powerful spiritual currency—especially when fashioned into intricate jewelry. Many ancient Andean societies, including the Chimú, believed their ruler was a living representative of the gods.
- The Chimú constructed cities and developed large-scale irrigation systems. There seems to have been much social stratification from peasant to nobility, and probably all the basic elements of the contemporary Inca civilization were present on a slightly smaller scale.
- These Ear Spools probably came from a grave site – belonging to a deceased Chimú nobleman often called the Long-Ears.
- It was essential for the deceased to wear the clothing and jewelry that were emblematic of social status and identity.
- Indigenous Andean peoples were profoundly religious and their beliefs pervaded all aspects of their lives. The mythical history provided the basis for claims to land and water.
- Quapaw [Mississippian, United States], Vessel [Underwater Panther], 1500, 2004.33

- A belief in the spiritual powers embodied in animal-like objects, called effigy vessels, was prevalent in Post-Contact Americas cultures from 1300-1700, as in earlier Americas cultures.
- Effigy pots that could have been used in a shrine, incorporated into a cultural ceremony or placed in a grave. By creating these vessel-like forms the culture believed that they would create a place for the spirit to reside and have effects upon either a person's life or on a deceased's journey in afterlife.
- Designs added to the exterior surface often carried symbolic meaning related to the animal's spiritual powers, but due to lack of written language the meaning of many of these symbols is unknown today.

**Chalchiuhtlicue, the Aztec goddess of water. Mexica (Aztec) c. 1200-1521 CE 2009.33**

Surprisingly, Chalchiuhtlicue, demonstrates not only her popularity as the goddess of water and consort/wife of Tlaloc, the rain god, but she also has traditions that date back to the ancient city of Teotihuacan (held in high esteem by the Aztecs) and the Pyramid of the Moon. She served as a subject for many public and private shrines in temples or even in homes. At the same time, she is associated with some of the great monumental architecture so characteristic of the Aztec civilization.

**Key ideas about Chalchiuhtlicue (She of the Jade Skirt):**

- In addition to the relationship with Tlaloc, she is also associated with Chicomecoatl, the Aztec corn god. When either is portrayed there are often identifying elements of both of them together. Both were also believed to help with fertility.
- As the goddess of the fourth element, she was the ruler of the 4th of the 5 suns in Aztec mythology.
- She was honored by those who made their living from water and was a protector of women. She also watched over children and was believed present for the first bathing of an infant.
- Many believe that a 20 ton sculpture discovered at the top of the Pyramid of the Moon in Teotihuacan was dedicated to her.

**Quapaw [Mississippian, United States], Vessel [Underwater Panther], 1500, clay, pigments, 2004.33 G260**

**Casas Grandes [Paquime, Mexico], Bear Effigy Pot, 1160-1260, earthenware clay, pigment, 83.90.1 G260**

**KEY IDEA:** A belief in the spiritual powers embodied in animal-like objects, called effigy vessels, was prevalent in Post-Contact Americas cultures from 1300-1700, as in earlier Americas cultures.

(Also try to picture from Peru the Nazca Fish or the Moche Owl or from Mexico the Colima Dogs.)

- These two vessels are examples of animal effigy pots that could have been used in a shrine, incorporated into a cultural ritual or placed in a grave. The culture believed that by creating the animal as part of a vessel-like form that they would create a place for the spirit to reside and have effects upon either a person's life or on a deceased's journey in afterlife. Casas Grandes effigy vessels were produced in greater numbers than in any other Southwest culture.
- Designs added to the exterior surface often carried symbolic meaning related to the animal's spiritual powers, but due to lack of written language the meaning of many of these symbols is unknown today.

## Group 5: Early Africa: Nok, Djenné, Ife, Benin

Lucy Hicks, Brenda Wyley, Jan Lysen, Debbie Koller, Kay Quinn

### Notes:

#### INTRODUCTION

Our group will present art from early Africa from the sub-Saharan region in West Africa (current day Nigeria and Mali). The oldest object in our collection is a Head found near the village of Nok, dated 1000 BCE to 300 CE. The other objects, all heads or figures, come from the significant urban centers of Djenne, Ife and Benin City in West Africa. They represent art from the Malian empire and Yoruba and Edo peoples, respectively. They date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century up to the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The key ideas you will see reflected in these objects are:

- **Visual abstraction.** Most of these figures favor *visual abstraction* and *simplification* over naturalistic representation; they tend to represent objects rather than *depict* them. Even the naturalistic heads from Ife have been smoothed and simplified in an effort to abstract and generalize stylistic norms. Another feature is that the heads are larger than the bodies (from which they have often been detached), perhaps reflecting a belief that the head is associated with knowledge, character and judgement.
- **Identity.** These heads and figures can be seen in many ways: as ordinary people dressed for special occasions or people of high status. They may also represent guardian figurers, heroes, deified ancestors and rulers or royalty.
- **Spiritual connection.** These objects reflect the beliefs of many African groups “in an invisible otherworld of sacred ancestors, spirits, and deities who *mediate in the affairs of the world.*” (O’Riley, p. 230) These objects may have been used in *performances* intended to connect to a time when ancestors lived.

#### PIECES:

2002.27.16	Nok Head, terracotta 1000 BCE-300 CE
95.84	Ife Head, terracotta 12-14 <sup>th</sup> c.
83.168	Djenne Equestrian Figure, wood 13-15 <sup>th</sup> c.
2007.13	Benin Memorial Head, bronze 1550-1650
56.33	Benin Tusk, ivory 1775-1777

#### Head, Nok

This head is an example of the earliest known terra cotta sculpture of sub-Saharan Africa. Many heads have been discovered in an area near the village of Nok in current day Nigeria on the Jos plateau north of the Niger and Benue rivers. They were likely washed away from their original sites and have been found widely dispersed, most of them with the heads detached from their bodies. The heads are large in comparison to the bodies which were stout (an example of *abstraction*). The scale of the heads could be related to beliefs that the head is the spiritual essence of the body. The basic features of these heads are *stylized*: the eyes are triangular and D shaped and there are protruding shapes in a refined hairstyle.

The heads were mostly hollow and fired with holes in the eyes, nostrils and mouth that allowed air to circulate. These heads could be either people of high social status or ordinary people dressed for special occasions (other heads have elaborate jewelry) (an example of *identity*). They demonstrate great technical accomplishment.

### **Shrine Head**

In contrast to the abstraction of the Nok head and more typical African art, The Shrine Head from the Ife (Yoruba) culture created over 900 years ago, is very realistic. Ancient royalty (in present day Nigeria) often hired artists to create life-like portraits of themselves or their ancestors, displaying their power and status.

Key features include the vertical lines following the natural curves of her face, the elaborate hairstyle/headress with its parallel ridges, and the neck rings of flesh, a sign of prosperity.

Her beautiful gaze expresses what the Yoruba people consider to be a person's inner spirituality. She is indeed a commanding, beautiful, African queen.

### **Equestrian Figure**

West Africa was a major source of gold for Europe and the area known as Djenné in what is now Mali is important due to its proximity to the trade routes from NE Africa (Egypt), NW Africa (Tunisia) to the far West central Africa for shipping trade to Europe. Many cultures were brought together in this one very small area in a very large continent.

This figure, made of the hardest wood found in Africa was unearthed on the bluffs of the inland Niger Delta and because of it being on the bluffs and in a constant breeze that kept the humidity down it preserved the wood that was carved in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> c. The figure as hunter or ruler is indicated by his jewelry, weapons, and position on the horse. In the ancient empires of West Africa, horses were associated with wealth, kingship, education and prestige, and represented power in several realms: political military, legal, and mystical. Horses were rare in African empires south of the Sahara, and only kings and their cavalries were allowed to possess them due to their cost, education needed for their care and training as well as the climate in Sub Sahara Africa was not conducive to keeping horses. Key point-status and identity.

Hieratic scale is present in this piece as the rider is considerably larger than the horse indicating his power and importance and the detail the artist carved for his attire and accoutrements.

His head is elongated with broad protruding eyes and high cheekbones, full lips, trim beard that juts from his chin, and delicate scarification on both temples and around the eyes. He wears short pants with floral motif, skull cap strapped on under his chin, necklace made of hexagonal and larger circular beads, and pendant similar to bronze ones found in the inland Niger Delta. There are clear Muslim influences in his attire, in features like his beard and cap in addition to the horse that most likely came from Egypt. Key Point-visual abstraction.

Our Equestrian figure is theorized to be used atop a ceremonial stick, a piece of art seen in motion.

## Benin Head

Mia currently has 5 objects on display from the ancient kingdom of Benin, founded in 1170, the start of the Edo Culture. The Benin Kingdom laid within present day Nigeria. One of our 5 objects is the **Memorial Head**, a bronze sculpture made somewhere between 1550-1650, a very wealthy period when Benin was an important trading partner with Europe. There were many Benin Memorial Heads. Each new king, called the *Oba* was obligated to commission a bronze head to decorate the shrine honoring his deceased predecessor, usually his father. There were also Memorial Heads for Queen Mothers (called *Iyoba*) identified by pointed caps and four marks above the eyes: however, we know this one is for an Oba/King due to the round cap and three marks above each eye. Regardless of the age at death, the Oba was characterized with a youthful, healthy face and solid forward gaze of a strong leader. The rings on the neck depicted the precious coral beads from the Mediterranean and were thought to connect the Oba spiritually to wise predecessors and ancestors (explicit example of spiritual connection to ancestors). A hole in the top of the Memorial Head allowed it to serve as a pedestal for a carved **Tusk** (like the one on display here) chronicling the exploits of the Oba (numerous examples of identity through status). Most Benin art was destroyed or seized by the British in the Punitive Expedition of 1897, in retaliation of the Benin massacre. In 1938, some coral regalia was returned to Benin by Britain. The 5 items that found their way to Mia are an honor and allow us to tell the story of the Benin Empire and the Edo Culture.

## Conclusion

All of the objects we have just examined are examples of technical virtuosity and choices made by the artists of that place and time. We have been limited in our understanding of early African art both by the materials that were often used and that fact that many objects were removed from their original contexts. Wooden sculptures, for example, did not survive the sub-Saharan climate. In contrast to earlier views of African art as “primitive,” today we view Africa both as the cradle of human civilization and of art.

## Group 6: Early Medieval, Romanesque, and Gothic in Europe

Suzanne LeRoy, Janelle Christensen, Mary McMahan, Maggie Rosine

### Notes:

Transitioning from classical realism we begin to see a turn inward toward the spiritual self. There was a belief that sin was the root of plague, famine, and war during the medieval period while influencing Romanesque and Gothic art. We see a greater level of patronage towards the arts that happens in large part due to Charlemagne establishing a stable society through religion and education. The development of the Silk Road and level of trade affected artistic traditions and caused them to evolve and absorb other cultural elements. We see art reflecting on the emotional elements of biblical tales as well as the human experience. The narrative of these objects is supremely important.

### 1. *Madonna Enthroned with the Christ Child*

Late 12th Century (cont. of Crusades)

Unknown artist, France

Marble, 66.24

1. Madonna is seen sitting on a church, which is acting as her throne and in turn she acts as the throne for Christ child. Also as the intercessor between Christ and the human world.
2. Although she is human, she is very detached from Christ child. They are looking out at the viewer and very rigid. There is no interaction between mother and child.
3. As we look at this Madonna and Child we see the impact that sculpture places on Madonna and Christ, being elevated figures that served as cult objects for an illiterate population.

## 2. *Crucifixion*

C. 1180

Unknown Artist, Spain

Limestone, 2015.69A-D

G340

1. This crucifixion scene brings back monumental sculpture.
2. Part of a Tympanum of a church, a rounded arch shaped niche that houses sculpture above an entry way. Perspective is played with and physical elements are distorted to make it seem more realistic and emotionally impactful.
3. We see a shift in sculpture towards expressive gestures and large eyes, the eyes being pathways to the soul. Meant to stir emotion in the viewer. John the Baptist and mother Mary are showing despair at the sight of Christ on the cross.
4. Pilgrims would journey to different cathedrals and churches to view relics and to take in the visual narratives of sculpture and art within the cathedral as a part of a spiritual journey.

## 3. *Madonna and Child*

14th Century (Great turmoil in 14th century; 1347-1350 Black Death/more waves to follow; the Inquisition; Hundred Years War 1337-1453; Great Famine 1315-1317; Europe did not fully recover from universal crop failures until 1322) – Widespread feelings of dread and futility, and intense pessimism during 14th century).

Unknown Artist, France

Limestone, Polychromed 63.59

(Not on View)

1. Example of transcendence of artistic tradition during the Romanesque period. We see the human element incorporated with the religious subject matter and a harkening back to classical sculptural forms, such as the strong S curve and relaxed posture. Another way we see this in the Madonna and Child is in the clothing, the drapery, and the Byzantine nod she is giving to Christ child.
2. During the Gothic period there is an unprecedented allocation of resources devoted to religious art and architecture. We see gothic cathedrals erected that reach high into the heavens, incorporate stained glass, and use the massive stones that manage to ground these structures down onto earth. Divinity is experienced through luminosity, verticality, and monumentality.
3. More relatable sculpture that brings in the interaction between mother and son versus Christ and Queen of Heaven. The familiar is rooted in the observations of the people the viewers see around them.
4. Images were made to instruct, which brings in the humanist element that we are moving towards as we are in the Gothic period. This sculpture was meant to be seen in the round.

## 4. *Lamentation*

1490's (15th century: discovery of the New World; End of Hundred Years War. Spread of Christianity by missionaries; early 16th century – Protestant Reformation).

Hans Schnatterpeck

Pine, polychrome and gilt 2011.2

1. The original coloration and the realistic and dramatic way in which each figure is depicted is remarkable. Jesus has all the coloring of a man who has passed on, while his wound is bloodied. Even tears are painted onto the mourners. This signals a shift into the Gothic era of sculpture where we are asked as a viewer to respond to the emotion of the scene.
2. The emotion of the sculpture speaks to a shift to more realistic humanistic representations of people. There is less interpretation about the emotion of the moment and more of a direct confrontation. Schnatterpeck pushes us to confront the tears, blood, and death of Christ. He creates such a direct and impactful sense of realism. Christ's crucifixion was brutal and he wanted to show the physical wounds of it.
3. Artists begin to use wood in sculpture and patrons become more diversified, we see more communities, merchants, and churches purchasing art.
4. Hierarchic scale, Christ as the monumental figure. We are moving toward 3 dimensional sculpture. The angles and drapery folds influenced the German Expressionists.

## **Group 7: Proto-Renaissance and Southern Renaissance**

Mary Ann Wark, Charlie Botzenmayer, Susan Drummond, Jeanne Lutz, and Josie Owens

### **Notes:**

We have chosen 2 objects from each time period that we think represent key ideas from that art period.

### **Proto-Renaissance (14th C/early 15th C)**

*Madonna and Child*, Segna di Buonaventura, c. 1310 (87.64)

- Shows Byzantine influence in the Proto-Renaissance - Byzantine Nod and patterns in Mary's robe (also Classical and Gothic art influences in this period)
- The "informal and naturalistic portrayal of the figures reflects a desire for a more personal association with God" that was developing in this period
- Affection between Mary and Jesus shows humanity
- Tempera paint used which dries quickly; still artists are trying to create shadows (green tint underlayer on face) and experiment with light (rose color)

*Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints*, Bernardo Daddi, 1339 (34.20)

- This is a small portable triptych - an individual devotional object - which shows the personal relationship with God that was important
- The plague led to more devotional objects like this as people tried to understand the horror

- See more perspective, shadow
- Still have gold and stylization of Byzantine
- Daddi was a “close follower of Giotto who first expressed the sculptural solidity of human form” seen in Mary

### **Southern Italian Renaissance - 1400s**

*The Nativity*, Fra Angelico (Fra Giovanni da Fiesole), c. 1425 (68.41.8)

- Shows that visual not scientific perspective is important (ox is not realistic in size); artists interested in natural world
- Artist was a monk; not in guild
- See classical proportion and balance, important during time, used in the triangular composition
- Depth in the stable shows the perspective through scientific method that was used in Southern Renaissance

*Portrait of a Lady*, Benedetto Ghirlandaio, 15th C (68.41.9)

- Encounters with world outside Europe brought new money and changed economy; led to new middle class/merchants who were buying and commissioning art
- Portraiture was a way to spend and show off new wealth
- Shows the interest in humans as physical, psychological, and intellectual beings - the woman is attractive but not stylized; contemporary clothing and lots of jewels; dyed blond hair and arched eyebrows and heavy eyelids were prized features of the time
- Oil painting! This new medium allows for painter to do more because paint dries more slowly; the virtuosity in the veil
- Power of the artist: his workshop had amongst its apprentices Michelangelo.

### **Group 8: Northern Renaissance (including some printmaking)**

Susan Arndt, Linda Goldenberg, Kathryn Schwyzer, Kit Wilson

#### **Notes:**

Southern Netherlands, known as Flanders, became the leading center of painting in Europe outside of Italy. This region saw a burgeoning trade with non-European cultures, creating vast wealth and a new rich middle class, which supported increased scholarship and art. Religious views changed from a supernatural orientation to one concerned with nature and human kind. There was a new

focus on detailed observation of the natural world and the use of symbols within the artwork, as well as a rise in portraiture.

*Linda*

**Master of the Legend of Saint Lucy, Lamentation with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine of Alexandria 35.7.87**

Key points: times are changing. The city of Bruges is the most important city in Flanders. The city is on a major water channel coming from the North Sea. Bruges is known for its textiles and is sending them all through Europe and beyond. This and the rise in commercial commodities is creating a major banking system throughout Europe. All this commerce is creating a new and prosperous middle class. As the merchant class expanded so did their desire to have more beautiful possessions. They created beautiful architecture for civic and religious reasons. Bruges became the capital. As art was commissioned the request for specific and tangible detail in their tapestries, paintings, illuminated manuscripts.

We have a triptych where the center panel combines 2 scenes of Christian iconography. That of the mourning of Christ © with Mary holding Christ in her lap. Very refinement is intended to stimulate reverence among the worshippers.

The invention of oil paint, giving artist extra ability to create exquisite details.

The presence of other figures around, Mary and Christ may be to represent the lamentation of Christ. But! The religious scene is not all the artist wants you to SEE

Now look beyond the religious piece for this triptych. The city of Bruges is placed in the back of the scene. The architecture so detailed that historians can date this work. This juxtaposition of religious and secular allows the painting to be more relevant. Another example would be the contemporary clothing. There is a new mix. There is a reverence to all things here, not just religious. In God's eye all things were sacred so why would you diminish one or the other in a comparison.

The amount of symbolism in the side panels. Detail of fabric, architecture, foliage, creating of a landscape that is not the landscape of Bruges. The artist of Flanders are spreading their wings, quite literally.

When the triptych is closed there are 2 panels that are painted in Grisaille, literally meaning grey. Grisaille was used to show the virtuosity of the artist. They are to look like stone statues of Gabrielle on one side and the Virgin Mary on the other panel.

This is heavy and rich in all that was characteristic of the northern Renaissance, Flemish painting

*Susan*

This was also a time of artistic innovation with the widespread use of oil painting and the invention of the printing press. Printed images were cheaper to produce, and allowed a wider population to buy and display art in their homes.

Just as Apple's introduction of the Mac was a game changer for personal computing and information access in 1984. Johannes Gutenberg's invention of movable type and the printing press forever changed the way people accessed information and knowledge beginning in 1450.

At a time when the middle class was on the rise, the printing press enabled literacy and education to flourish.

The Gutenberg bible was a printed copy of the Vulgate, (St Jerome's translation from Hebrew and Greek to Latin) It was standardized in printing so that chapter headings and capitals could be rubricated (embellished) by hand as we see here. The cost would be reflective of the amount of embellishment determined by the purchaser.

There are 48-49 known copies in existence, 21 of which are complete. Mia's individual leaves are captioned as "Noble Fragments" from a "seriously incomplete" bible that had been broken down for sale in the early 20th century prior to being acquired by Mia.

At the time of printing a complete version of the bible would have cost about 30 Florins; equivalent to three years wages for a clerk. A complete version of the bible would have been printed in a two volume set. Each volume would have weighed about 14 lbs. Ironically, one of the things that Gutenberg may have done to fund the printing of the bible is to have also printed indulgences, those pesky get out of jail free cards that Martin Luther took issue with...

Which brings us to Martin Luther's contemporary and friend, Lucas Cranach. As a court painter to Frederick III (the Wise) of Saxony, (aka Luther's protector) Cranach painted altar panels, and multiple pieces for Frederick's palaces.

But he was more than a courtier. He also painted portraits of the rising middle and merchant class.

Moritz and Anna Buchner in Mia's collection are just such an example. Cranach has painted the couple demonstrating their wealth and elevated social standing by the clothing and jewelry they wear. They both demonstrate a confident bearing in the way they sit for the artist, as though they know they have earned that privilege.

Cranach himself was quite a demonstration of the new mobility in the middle class. He participated in local government, (8 times on the city council, 3 times mayor). He developed an artist workshop and acquired a pharmacy, (where artists' pigments were sold). He also acquired a book shop and printing press where he printed works by Martin Luther.

*Kit*

### **Albrecht Durer, *Melencolia I*, 1514 Engraving**

It was during the Renaissance that there was a dramatic rise in printmaking, first woodcut then intaglio techniques. Printed images were more widely disseminated and afforded more of society to be art and literature patrons. Albrecht Durer was a master of this new technology. *Melencolia I* is a good illustration of several of the key ideas of Northern Renaissance art. It is a study of the weight of intellectual pursuits, illustrating the growth in intellectual interests. Mathematical knowledge is referenced by the use of the symbols: compass, geometrical solid, scale, the hourglass, the 4 × 4 magic square, with the two middle cells of the bottom row giving the date of the engraving: 1514. The square features the traditional magic square rules based on the number 34, and in addition, the square's four

quadrants, corners and center also equal this number. The geometric shape to the left is now known as Dürer's solid, as this was the first time this shape has been depicted in art. While a fantastical image, there is great focus on natural detail as shown in the depiction of the angel's gown and hair. This work exhibits Northern Renaissance aspects in a wonderfully quirky way.

## **Group 9: High Renaissance, Venetian Renaissance, and Mannerism**

Angie Seutter, Randall Johnson, Terry Keir, Jennifer Youngberg, Paulette Day

### **Notes:**

#### **INTRO:**

The High Renaissance in Italy (from around 1480-1527) united the principles of harmony and balance with Classical ideals, all while adding in rich colors and cohesive design. During this time period and into the late 1500s, the Venetians, influenced by their Byzantine heritage and technical advances, worked within the key High Renaissance principles while adding their own touch with rich patterned surfaces and emphasized color and light. Yet, a mere 40 years after the High Renaissance started, another artistic movement swept across Italy that dramatically departed from the classical norms of the day. Randy, Paulette and Jennifer will now lead you across Italy and its artistic styles of the 1500s by way of the collection here at MIA.

#### **HIGH RENAISSANCE**

1. Definition of High Renaissance. : the artistic style of the first half of the 16th century in western Europe especially as manifested in Rome and Florence and characterized by heroic centralized composition, technical mastery of drawing and conception, and a mature humanistic content.
2. a style of art developed in Italy in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, chiefly characterized by an emphasis on draftsmanship, schematized, often centralized compositions, and the illusion of sculptural volume in painting.

Compare Early Renaissance, Venetian (def2).

Enamels have long been used to decorate the surface of metal objects, perhaps originally as a substitute for the more costly process of inlaying with precious or semiprecious stones but later as a decorative medium in their own right. Whereas paint on metal has a short life and, even when new, is overshadowed by the brilliance of the polished metal, enameling gives the surface of metal a durable, colored, decorative finish. With the painted enamels of the Renaissance and the portrait miniatures of the 17th century, the technique reached its most ambitious and artistic form, in which the craftsman attempted to create a version of an oil painting, using a metal sheet instead of a canvas and enamels instead of oil paints. This medium undoubtedly has its limitations—few painted-enamel plaques of the Renaissance, for example, are much more than one foot square—but while oil paints on canvas eventually fade and darken, the colors of enamels are permanent. Relatively few creative artists of distinction have chosen to work in this medium, however, and it has tended to be purely decorative.

Characteristics:

-halos gone

- more naturalism
- definite light source (shadows, three-dimensional)
- sense of stability and order (static compositions)
- commissions from private sources increased (no longer as dependent on the Church/royalty)

High Renaissance art is characterized by self-confident Humanism. Here we see artists admiring classical art and architecture as a way to show off their classical knowledge or for a patron who commissioned these works to seem more knowledgeable about the world and its history.

### **MIA - Basin with Apollo and the Muses, c. 1575-1600**

- [ ] earthenware covered with an opaque glaze that, unless color has been added, is white. It is variously called faience, majolica, and delftware. Essentially it is lead glaze made opaque by the addition of tin oxide; tin glaze was no doubt originally devised to conceal flaws of color in a fired-clay body. Tin-glazed ware is usually decorated with high-temperature colors. But unlike lead-glazed earthenware, which is painted on a fired unglazed body, tin-glazed ware is painted on a fired body that has been coated with raw, or unfired, glaze material; the ware is then fired a second time, at a lower temperature, indelibly fusing pigments and glaze. (Sometimes a transparent lead glaze is added over the painted decoration, requiring a third firing.) The advantage of tin glaze over lead is that it does not run when fired, and thus the pigments do not blur; the disadvantage is that—as in fresco painting, which is executed on fresh plaster—the surface of the glaze is absorbent, making alterations impossible.

### **Venetian Renaissance**

Venetians saw themselves as superior to Florence and Rome, rather than rivals.

Venice was the greatest commercial sea power in the Mediterranean which allowed its citizens to become wealthy and use their wealth to be patrons of the arts.

Their Byzantine heritage encouraged an art of rich patterned surfaces emphasizing light and color.

### **Titian painting (Mia), *The Temptation of Christ***

Titian—studied under the Bellini's. He used vibrant colors built up in layers using chiefly red, white, yellow, and black. He could obtain his pigments from professional retail color sellers, "Vendecolori", who sometimes mixed oil paints with ground glass to increase their transparency. In our painting, he conveys "mystical communication" through the subjects and uses "chiaroscuro" (light and dark) to dramatize the scene.

Venetians were the first artists to use oil paints on both wood and canvas. They were also the first to cover walls with large canvas paintings instead of frescoes. They emphasized mood or emotion in their paintings and often depicted "Nocturne" (night scenes) using chiaroscuro.

### **Bassano painting (Mia), *The Element of Water***

Jacopo Bassano—His workshop was in Bassano del Grappa, a small town outside of Venice and he worked with his son, Francesco. He remained independent of court life in order to keep control of his art. He trained in Venice and had a friendship with Titian, who influenced his work.

The Bassanos were known for their expertise with natural details and quality of luminosity. They were innovators in the creation of light in paintings by deepening the shadows for contrast. The techniques used by the Bassanos later influenced painters like El Greco and Caravaggio to throw an almost theatrical spotlight on subject matter.

### **MANNERISM:**

At the end of the high Renaissance, living in the shadow of the unrivaled masters of the immediate past such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael created a dilemma for the younger generation of artists. They were very much aware that a golden age had preceded them and that there was limited possibility of improving on the craftsmanship of their famous predecessors. Long-standing problems of perspective, foreshortening, correct anatomical rendering, and proportions had been solved and perfected. As a result, some artists choose to purposefully break the established rules and violate Renaissance assumptions, giving rise to Mannerism. Mannerism is the name given to the stylistic phase of European art covering the period from ca.1520 to ca.1590, the transitional phase between the High Renaissance and the Baroque.

Mannerism is first and foremost a strong reaction to, and a dramatic departure from, the ideal order of the art of the Renaissance. Naturalism gave way to the free play of the imagination. Classical composure yielded to nervous movement. Clear definition of space became a jumble of picture planes crowded with twisted figures. Symmetry and focus on the central figure were replaced by off-balance diagonals that made it difficult to find the protagonists of the drama amid the numerous directional lines. Backgrounds, formerly intended as a credible context for the subject, were now vaguely defined or even nonexistent. The norms of body proportions were distorted by the unnatural elongation of figures. Chiaroscuro no longer served to model figures but to create optical illusions, violent contrasts and theatrical lighting effects. Strong pure tonalities gave way to pastel hues or to unnatural colors. The Renaissance realm of clarity and order was disrupted, to be replaced by tension and ambiguity.

Let's consider some recurring characteristics of mannerism as seen in **El Greco's *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple***, which was painted in mid-16th century Italy, when the Mannerist style predominated the visual arts.

**Movement** - The Mannerist display of movement is fluid and expressive, more torsion than balance. A figure may be composed in an S-curve – as we see in the Christ figure, or the head might face the opposite direction of the feet – as we see in the man in the green cloak on the left side. There is a lot of twisting and contorting in the three partially-clothed figures to the left of Christ.

**Distortion of figures** – In Mannerism we see the distortion of the human figure, often with the objective of making it more expressive. Proportions could be imposed arbitrarily. In the El Greco painting, we see it in the relatively small head sizes, and look at the size of this woman's arm.

**Manipulation of Space** - In Mannerist compositions, space is unevenly filled. The picture plane is no longer constrained by the rules of perspective, and its logical boundaries are blurred or ignored. Sometimes there is only a neutral background, providing no comprehensible environment. Other times, the background seems to stretch into infinity, interspersed with scenes apparently not related the main theme. That's what we see in this El Greco painting. The background seems to go on forever, and while

the setting for this scene would be a temple in Jerusalem, we see what appears to be Venice in the distance.

Light - Just as they manipulated space and proportions to attain jarring effects, Mannerist artists also manipulated light for dramatic impact. No longer were the elements of a composition illuminated from a single light source, seemingly arriving from a logical point outside the painting. Now light was imposed arbitrarily, sometimes emanating from a source within the composition, sometimes coming from diverse directions, lighting elements at odd angles and casting impossible shadows. We see this in our painting where there seem to be many sources of light. This creates a jarring effect; your eye expects something consistent with reality, but it's not getting it here.

It should be noted that while we looked at a painting here, for a good part of the 16th century Mannerism was also the prevailing trend in architecture, sculpture, literature, and music.

Mannerism ran its course by about 1590, by which time it had been substantially replaced by the clearer and more uniform ideals of the early Baroque.

### **CONCLUSION:**

With our review of 16th century Italian art complete, we will now pass the microphone over to group 10 for a review of Islamic art. The influence of Islamic artists was never far from European countries boarding the Mediterranean. In fact, pieces from the Italian Renaissance here at MIA bear the signs of this influence from delicate foliage patterns to pseudo-kufic script.

## **Group 10: Islamic: Middle East and North Africa**

Ingrid Roberts, Kristen McDougall, Richard Lemanczykafka, Julie Holland, Meg Ubel

### **Notes:**

You may recall, Islamic art has three main forms of representation: Architecture, Decorative Arts and Books Arts. We will be sharing examples from each of these areas in order to illustrate our keys points regarding Islamic culture and artistic influence.

We'd like to begin by identifying 4 key ideas that summarize Islamic art

1. Muslims have a distinctive religious and artistic philosophy centered on the Qur'an, which contains the teachings of Allah as revealed to the prophet Muhammed. These teachings lead to the prohibition against figural images in Islamic religious art.
2. Islamic art has been influenced by traditions from many cultures due to invasion and conquest, as well as by trade and communication along the Silk Road (e.g. from China).
3. Given the absence of figural forms in Islamic religious art, calligraphy (from the Greek "callos" (beautiful) and "graphos" (writing) rose to being a highly valued and important sacred art form. Calligraphy is found in mosques, Qur'an manuscripts, poetry book, tiles, ceramics and carpets.
4. There is a marked distinction between Islamic sacred and secular art. Religious representation ensnares and subjugates the mind whereas abstract and repetitive designs such as geometric and floral arabesques free the mind and allow it to roam. Secular art, by contrast, can show humans and animals in everyday settings.

## ***Blue and White Ware***

The Silk Road was one of the most important international trade links ever to have existed. These overland and maritime commercial trade routes became conduits for a cross cultural artistic legacy. An example of an artistic tradition that traveled the Silk Road is blue and white porcelain.

Silk Road went from China, through Central Asia, to Caspian and Black seas. Official beginning was 139 BCE. By the 14 CE Chinese silk was already fashionable in Rome. Silk was valued so highly many traders preferred to be paid in silk rather than in gold or silver coins. The demand for porcelain nearly rivaled the demand for silk.

The West imported lacquerware, steel. Advanced farming equipment and exported aromatics, perfume horses and jewels.

The central corridor land-route is bounded by mountains on the north and south, consisting of a desert punctuated with oases. The animal most essential in crossing the caravan route was the double humped Bactrian camel, originating in present day Afghanistan. It could tolerate cold temperatures and long periods without water.

(Silk Road is likely conduit for the Bubonic plague. Fur pelts from Asia contaminated with flea-eggs hitting the shores of Italy in the 14th century.)

Muslim communities are known to have been present in China as early as the 8th century CE, especially in commercial harbors such as Canton and Quanzhou. These Muslim merchants in the Chinese coastal cities are credited with introducing Islamic, cobalt blue and white earthenware to China.

Subsequently, potters in South China began decorating white porcelain vessels with cobalt blue. However, blue and white porcelain was not valued in China and most of their output was exported to the Middle East and eventually Europe. To satisfy customers in the Middle East, the Chinese adopted Islamic iconography, such as pomegranates, tulips and Arabic script. Because of the weight and fragility of porcelain and ceramics, much of it was transported on sea routes. Chinese export porcelain made in 826 CE was recovered from a shipwreck in the South China Sea. Some of the pieces were decorated with Koranic inscriptions and geometric designs made expressly for the Islamic market.

Because of the weight and fragility of porcelain and ceramics, much of it was transported on sea routes. Chinese export porcelain made in 826 CE was recovered from a shipwreck in the South China Sea. Some of the pieces were decorated with Koranic inscriptions and geometric designs, again made expressly for the Islamic market.

These exotic objects were cherished in the Islamic world and became an inspiration for local potters. By the 12th century Islamic attempts to imitate Chinese porcelain in their own Frit ware provided an attractive local competition to Chinese imports.

The blue and white porcelain wasn't valued in China. The Chinese preferred red and white decorated porcelain and blue and white was mainly exported. Muslim merchants in Quanzhou handled the export trade. However, in the early Ming dynasty, the Court embraced blue and white porcelain, encouraged domestic use and in 1659 forbade trade with foreign countries. The Middle East and Europe were huge consumers of Chinese blue and white porcelain and their demand could not be met. This vacuum created an opportunity. It stimulated the Islamic production of blue and white pottery emulating

Chinese styles. The Persians did not have the recipe for porcelain, which was a State secret in China, but their high quality frit ware could fool some consumers. The Islamic potters adopted Chinese iconography at this time and false Chinese marks were used on some pieces.

***Plate, early 18th century, Persia (Iran) Safavid dynasty***

White earthenware with underglaze of blue and black decor

Islamic potters were the first to use cobalt-blue decoration. When commercial ties to China were reestablished during the 14th century, fine ceramics imported from the Far East, particularly blue and white, became extremely popular and greatly affected subsequent Islamic styles. This plate is closely related to Chinese porcelains of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

Hallmarks of Chinese iconography are the foliate rim, tendril design of the cavetto, animal motif in the center, and continuous scroll bands. All reference Chinese designs.

***Rectangular Tiles, Persia (Iran), 13th-14th century***

1. These Rectangular Tiles from the 13th-14th centuries. They were made in the Kashan ceramic workshops, probably during the Ilkhagm period. Painted architectural tiles often bear inscriptions from verses in the Qur'an. These tiles are inscribed with "His messenger who . . . (top) . . . Do not know. (bottom). They were probably part of a mihrab, the sacred wall niche found in every mosque that orients the worshipper toward the holy city of Mecca during prayers. They would be set low in would be set low in the niche to assist prostrate worshippers in focusing on the beauty of Islam and the Qur'an.

(Show image of a mihrab for context)

2. The Islamic restriction on making figural images led to the development of one of the most outstanding features of Islamic art. Artists avoided depicting lifelike forms. Instead, they developed a special kind of decoration, called arabesque (surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils). Tiles are also floral or geometric with mathematical themes of ordered repetition and elaborate calligraphy. Placed together these tiles constitute an infinitely repeated pattern that extends beyond the visible material world. To many in the Islamic world, they symbolize the infinite, freeing the mind and allowing it to roam. The Islamic artist conveys a definite spirituality without the iconography of Christian art.

3. Another restriction on art discouraged the use of costly materials. Islamic artists learned to decorate objects made of less expensive materials so skillfully that they looked as beautiful as silver or gold. The Kashan ceramic workshops in Iran specialized in manufacturing tiles with a newly developed metallic luster glaze technique which was characteristically an overglaze of gold leaf. It was thought to be invented specifically for painted tiles on architectural walls. These two tiles are earthenware with relief calligraphy and an underglaze painted in the typical turquoise and blue with gold luster overglaze.

4. Ceramic tile is a key component of Islamic architecture. Tiles decorated in this technique were used lavishly to adorn both interior and exterior surfaces of buildings such as palaces, mosques, and shrines, and architectural elements including minarets and domes

Ingrid – ***Page from the Koran*** (51.37.21), Unknown artist, Egypt, c. 1350

The first piece of Islamic art we've selected from Mia's collection is a page from the Koran. This is a beautiful page of cursive style writing that incorporates both artistic and technical skills of Illuminated (decorated text and margins) books from the Mamluk period (13th century). The cursive writing shown here has replaced the Kufic style of writing as the preferred Koranic script. You can see that there are tall and thin vertical elements to the main body of this page (muhaqqaq script) as well as horizontal sweeping strokes that appear "below the line". The chapter heading (thuluth script) is framed in gold and decorated with vegetal ornamentation (geometric patterns, pertaining to plants). Remember, there were no depictions of figural images allowed in religious Islamic art. The use of geometric patterns shown in these floral designs, allow the mind to be free, wander, and be more spiritually contemplative.

Book arts were considered the art of the elite. Often copies of the Koran were commissioned by Sultans or emirs (an Arab ruler, prince) for specific mosques and endowed by religious foundations. Calligraphers (scribes) were held in the highest esteem and thus enjoyed the highest status of all artists in Islamic society. The Qur'an was considered the word of God and this significance extended (and still does) to the act of writing. The written word is seen as the visual equivalent to the spoken word. While calligraphy was central to Islamic book arts, it played an important role throughout a variety of artistic mediums and is widely seen throughout Islamic art.

A few key things to remember about the visual interpretation of Calligraphy:

- 18 letter forms in Arabic
- Horizontal format
- Read right to left
- No capital letters
- Black represents consonants
- Red indicates pronunciation of vowels
- Emblem indicates end of one line – like punctuation
- Start reading from the back (end) of the book and go forward

Next let's look at another piece from our collection that shows how Islamic art was influenced by other cultures, as tells the Story of Blue and White.

### ***"Bowl Depicting Ladies on Horseback."***

Although not specifically stated in the Qur'an, it was understood from the inception of Islam, that the use of figural representations of humans or animals was unacceptable! This was especially true regarding all illustrations in the Qur'an itself, as well as on architecture or functional objects related to or reflective of Islamic teachings. And as we have already witnessed, the illustrations in the Qur'an and other religious books as well as those on sacred buildings and most everyday functional ceramic and textile items; were decorated with fantastic arabesque that utilized geometric and floral elements. Exquisite calligraphy and Kufic writings could also be incorporated into these.

However, remember, those were either sacred objects & places, or practical items used by the masses. For when it came to secular works that were commissioned by royalty and high ranking officials for their

personal enjoyment it was often a totally different story. These luxury items often illustrated scenes of a ruler's adventures & conquests, courtly life & past-times, poetic love stories, & legends as well as accounts from history. And that is exactly the case with the MIA's "Bowl Depicting Ladies on Horseback." (54.46.432.) from the 12th-13th century, Iran.

This scene shows ten ladies on horseback and one standing off to the side. Although more stylistic than realistic, the artist(s) has/have shown a number of the women in different riding positions and the horse's legs in varied prancing positions. It is also important to notice that this ceramic piece incorporates two key aspects of Islamic art; it utilizes the highly regarded and especially valued cobalt blue glaze, and if the viewer looks carefully it is possible to observe some patterned ornamentation in some of the lady's outfits and even on a few of the horse's bodies!

And finally, it is certainly worthy of mention to point out that this bowl is a superb example of "Minai-ware." Minai is a Persian word for enamel, and this ceramic technique; of painting stone ware with multi-colored ceramic glazes, definitely fits this method. This intricately painted and exceptionally beautiful piece is representative of the long and illustrious tradition of the ceramic ware produced by Islamic artists throughout time.

## THE END!