

Contents

A Note on Transliteration	vi
A Note on Dating	vi
A Note on Geographic Terms	vi
Acknowledgments	vii

Introduction: Archives, Flotsam, and Tales of Globalism 1

Part 1. From al-Andalus to Germany: Objects, Techniques, and Materials

Chapter 1. Melting, Merchandise, and Medicine in the Eastern Mediterranean 23

Censers on the Market	23
Ore and Origins	33
Changing Shapes	38
Incense and Medicine	41
Censers in Motion	44
Temporalities	46

Chapter 2. Knowledge and Craft in Medieval Spain and Germany 53

Innovation in Making Niello	53
The Nature of Niello	55
Three Different Histories of Niello	56
Inspiration and Imitation	73
Spiral as Essential Structure	77
Spiral as Sign	79

Chapter 3. Coconuts and Cosmology in Medieval Germany 87

A Composite Object	87
Looking Beyond and Within	92
Treasures and Trophies	95
Changing Functions	99
Fruits from Paradise	101
Incarnated Knops	107

Part 2. From Iraq to India and Africa: Technologies, Iconographies, and Marvels

Chapter 4. Magic and Medicine in Medieval Mesopotamia 113

- Magic-Medicinal and Incantation Bowls 113
- Poison Bowls and Precedents 118
- Hydrophobia and Surrogacy 127
- Serpents, Scorpions, and Quadrupeds 131
- Similarity and Sympathy 135
- Constellation, Commodification, and the Portable Library 138

Chapter 5. Distance Made Tangible in Medieval Ethiopia 147

- An Equestrian Relief 147
- Prophet, Saint, and King 157
- Princely Hunters 162
- Maritime Chimeras 165
- Indian Antecedents? 171
- Objects, Images, and Material Connections 183

Chapter 6. Narrative and Wonder in the Indian Ocean 191

- An Iraqi *Maqāmāt* 191
- Sailors and Slaves in a Maritime Cosmopolis 196
- The Artist as Exegete 204
- A Wondrous Interlude 211
- A Magical Denouement 215
- Anachronisms, Survivals, and Revivals 219

Conclusion: Global, Local, and Temporal 229

- Notes 235
- Bibliography 253
- Index 283
- Image Credits 292

Introduction

Archives, Flotsam, and Tales of Globalism

Art history has tricked itself into believing that it is a discipline of images, when really it has always been a discipline of objects.¹

—Michael Yonan, “Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies,” *West 86th* 18/2 (2011), 240.

In an article entitled “Seeing the Past,” published in the journal *Past and Present* in 1988, the historian Roy Porter wrote, “[I]n their workaday practice the vast bulk of historians remain latter-day iconoclasts. Our training encourages us to assume the primacy of written records in terms both of reliability and representativeness.”² In the decades since this was written, a “material turn” in the humanities has done much to remedy the idea that history inheres only in texts and inscriptions. Rather than serving as supplements to written matter, the “real” stuff of history, artifacts and images are increasingly deployed as sources from which historians craft their narratives. In addition, recent approaches to pre-modern textual archives have acknowledged that the documentary value of textual archives is inseparable from the form and materials used to fashion the written sources that they contain.³ This interest in integrating the documentary values of texts and things, and acknowledging texts as things, has coincided with a recent fascination with rethinking subject-object relations, witnessed in attention to the potential agency of material objects and to embodied engagement with them—from the material traces that objects have left on manuscripts and texts, for example.⁴

Moving beyond a traditional tendency to privilege semantic content or immaterial meaning over questions of form (codex versus role, or the forms of script used), medium (paper, papyrus, parchment, etc.), or use, such approaches foreground the objecthood of all kinds of archives.

The past decade has also witnessed the proliferation of historical and theoretical works written on and from objects as primary sources.⁵ The writing of object histories, or of history from objects, inverts the traditional role of objects as props or supplements to historical narratives based primarily on inscriptions and texts, challenging the idea that historical truth inheres exclusively in written documents.⁶

We are, however, often confronted with objects that lack any kind of meta-data detailing their origins, the routes along which they traveled, and their meanings in the places in which they came to rest. In such cases there is a tendency to take

for granted the capacity of the artifact to function as a kind of document whose historical value can be correlated with relevant secondary documents, such as inscriptions, historical texts, and other objects. This is despite the fact that the challenge of coordinating fragmentary material evidence with textual references to objects that are often marked by conventional ideals and specialized terminology is less than straightforward.⁷ There are, moreover, times and places when the textual archive is extremely thin, or non-existent, for a variety of reasons. As the archaeologist Mark Horton noted in 2004, writing of medieval exchanges between northwestern India and East Africa, “[i]f we were to rely solely upon documentary evidence, then much of the trade of the Indian Ocean maritime world would be invisible.”⁸ In such cases, the documentary and historical value of material culture, whether archaeological remains, architecture, or artifacts, is fundamental.

The book that follows represents a collaboration between two medievalists who often face the challenge of writing histories for which artifacts, images, or monuments are the primary, or the only available, documentary evidence. That challenge is even more acute when objects or the ideas and techniques that they embody circulate beyond the boundaries naturalized in modern disciplinary specializations. This is the case with the objects discussed in the six following chapters. Each chapter presents a case study focused on a specific object or class of objects that indexes histories of circulation and reception across a geography from northern Europe to Ethiopia, and from the Red Sea to India. The case studies explore the circulation and reception of artifacts, imagery, and techniques across geographic and temporal distances, but also conversions and transformations that illuminate forms of cross-cultural and cross-temporal exchange that lie beyond the scope of most kinds of textual materials available to historians.⁹ The studies range in medium from metal vessels to manuscripts, and from multimedia reliquaries to stone reliefs.

The six case studies are presented in two distinct but loosely interrelated sections. In part 1, we present a series of analyses concerning the circulation of objects, materials, and techniques between the Islamic lands of the Mediterranean (including their substantial non-Muslim communities) and the Christian kingdoms of al-Andalus and northern Europe. The final chapter in this section introduces a kind of material—coconut—that originated in the Indian Ocean but came to be enshrined in a German reliquary. This provides a segue into part 2, which moves us from

the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, considering the evidence for the inter- and intra-cultural reception of various forms of technologies, iconographies, and narratives of long-distance circulation. Sketching a series of direct and indirect connections between the central Islamic lands, the Horn of Africa, and western India, the three final chapters also consider the transcultural circulation of beliefs and knowledge concerning prophylaxis and protection from illness or misfortune and the practices that they inspired.

Implicit in the structure of the volume and the content of its chapters is the role, as a kind of hinge between both sections of the book, of Egypt: a region whose importance is apparent from the frequency with which we return to its cultures and histories, even if no single chapter is dedicated to an artifact of Egyptian provenance. The division between the two sections may initially seem arbitrary, but it reflects a distinction evident in the remarkable materials recovered from the Cairo Geniza, which document extensive trade networks extending across the Mediterranean from al-Andalus to Egypt, and from Egypt down the Red Sea to Yemen and across the Indian Ocean, but as distinct and non-overlapping circuits of exchange, the fulcrum of which was Cairo.

Our objects have been chosen for their ability to highlight segmented circuits of exchange between northern Europe, the Mediterranean, the central Islamic lands that were the heartlands of the Abbasid caliphate (750–1258), East Africa, and Asia. The chapters engage with both east-west and north-south exchange, acknowledging the role of the Mediterranean as a “connecting sea” but paying equal attention to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean worlds.¹⁰ In many of our case studies, maritime connections were necessary but not sufficient conditions of reception: the intersections between sea and land routes were no less crucial. Taken together, the case studies loosely delineate a series of intersecting cultural geographies, stretching from Andalusia and central Europe in the west to Egypt, Iraq, and India in the east, and to the direct and indirect contacts of both with the highlands of Ethiopia at the southern extremities of the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphates. In contrast to some recent object-oriented histories of globalism, there is no claim of comprehensive transhistorical or transregional coverage, and no attempt to offer a total history of global connections (were such a thing possible), even for the periods under consideration. The so-called Silk Road—which, along with Mediterranean studies, has become emblematic of recent work on cross-

cultural exchange and early globalism—barely features in what follows, for example.¹¹ Instead, by offering “thick” analyses of six different objects or object types, our aim is to demonstrate the potential that micro-analyses hold for writing macro histories of connectivity while also foregrounding other transregional networks that have received less scholarly attention.

In some cases, the precise point of origin and date of our chosen objects is uncertain; in others the chronology of their circulation must be deduced from the evidence of reception. They reflect a range of possibilities, from an absolute absence of any textual documentation, to objects for which a reasonable amount of historical data can be constituted from unassociated but contemporary (or near-contemporary) sources, to images that mediate between different genres of texts, but do so visually. Where we do make use of written sources, we deploy a range of texts whose use is not necessarily standard in the interpretation of pre-modern art and architecture. These include lapidaries, legal texts, medical treatises, and travel narratives.¹²

Some of the objects that we analyze are well known, long integrated into the art-historical canon, even if the dimensions explored here have been ignored or neglected. Others are barely known and have hardly received any published attention. Taken together, however, they cut across a high-low divide that has been particularly pervasive in our own discipline of art history, with architecture or painting standing at the apex of a series of media favored by pre- or early modern elites: a hierarchy often reproduced in lecture hall and museum. Many (but not all) of the objects that feature in the chapters that follow were not produced in a courtly milieu, but were commodities made for the market, or even banal materials that gained value through the process of circulation and consequent status as rarities far from their points of origin.

Our collaboration on this project has extended over six years, a period marked by significant developments globally, and in the fields and disciplines within which we work. Both of us have been the authors of earlier publications demonstrating the value of images, objects, and material culture in general for understanding histories of transcultural circulation and reception that are not addressed in textual sources, or that offer alternative perspectives on those that are.¹³ These works have, however, focused on specific object types or regions. By contrast, our case studies here move beyond a regional focus, to highlight material connections that contribute to understanding

early histories of globalism. The three studies in each of the two main sections of the book are written by a single author. Unlike many collaborations, which aim for the synthetic harmonization of individual voices, we have retained our differences in emphasis and register, acknowledging variations in approach fostered by our respective training and instincts as intrinsic to the process of collaboration. Every chapter is, however, informed by the discussions and exchanges, critiques and suggestions that have been fundamental to the research and writing.

Working on complex cross-cultural materials demands a range of skills that lie beyond the capacity of any single scholar. Despite the inevitable limitations of any collaboration, our hope is that looking collaboratively across and beyond our fields—whether with the eyes of a western medievalist on the Islamic world or an Islamicist on medieval Christendom—will contribute to scholarship on pre-modern connectivity at a moment when the need for collaborative approaches to complex material that crosses boundaries and established disciplinary specializations in so many ways is becoming ever more pressing.

Archives

Our original title for this book, and for the collaborative project out of which it emerged, was “Archives of Flotsam: Objects and Early Globalism.” The rationale for this choice is explained below. However, at the request of the press, concerned about the potential ambiguities (rather than the intended synergies) evoked by the conjunction of the two framing metaphors, the book appears under its current title. Narrative, the telling of tales, is central to the craft of the historian, who is often obliged to (re)construct historical phenomena from fragments, whether carefully curated or random survivals, to fill the gaps created by disparities in the documentary or material remnants of the past with subjective choices and assumptions that are not always made explicit, yet without lapsing into invention, or the writing of fiction. As this suggests, the tales that can be told from material remains are potentially multiple even if not infinite. Despite the poetic alliteration of the final title of this book, our preference throughout is to refer to those material remains as “objects” rather than “things.” The latter term has enjoyed considerable popularity in certain forms of modernist discourse,¹⁴ while the former remains more common among scholars of premodernity. Although the distinction between things and objects in modern scholarship is often

predicated on questions of perception and the relative value afforded materiality, the choice of a term that might be seen as dialectically opposed to the “things” of our title is in no way meant to diminish attention to questions of materiality. Nor is it intended to sideline consideration of the relationship between objects and the human subjects who produce, perceive, and use them: topics that surface at many points below. Instead, like the original framing metaphor for the book, with its ambiguous tension between archive and flotsam, the play between terms is intended to highlight the ambiguities and slippages that characterize those relationships and the ways in which we perceive and write about them.

Our original choice of the archive as one of two framing metaphors for the six case studies that follow resonates with a recent turn to the archive as a historical-material phenomenon across the humanities. This offers precedents for endeavors to broaden the range of materials available to historians beyond those associated with a courtly milieu. We think, for example, of attempts to reconstruct the cultural, material, ritual, and social life of Jewish merchants from Egypt, Yemen, and elsewhere, resident on the south coast of India in the twelfth century, from their letters preserved in the Cairo Geniza (a conventional term for a vast store of documents found in the Ben Ezra synagogue of Fustat in Cairo) and in other Cairene synagogues.¹⁵ These related histories provide profound insights into the transregional networks that stretched from India to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in the period covered by several of our case studies. They demonstrate how rich the possibilities are for crafting complex transcultural and transregional histories from randomly preserved materials found outside the world of rulers and the court. A recent cache of medieval documents excavated in the trade emporium of Quseir al-Qadim on the Red Sea coast of Egypt, for instance, preserves documentary traces of merchants, not the kinds of carefully crafted official documents found in royal archives. Nonetheless, this mundane archive of paper fragments was crucial in enabling historians to reconstruct cultural, economic, and social histories to which the maritime and terrestrial networks connecting the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean were central. These histories included insights into aspects of social practice such as the role of amulets and magic in offering protection to those moving along often treacherous maritime routes: a topic to which we will return in chapter 6.

Unlike these archives, which contain corpora of documents written on paper or cloth, the case

studies that follow are concerned with objects. Although the very term “archive” may conjure an image of dusty repositories of fragile and crumbling texts, or even a wonderfully well-ordered storehouse of documents and manuscripts, recent work on historical archives and libraries has reminded us that “everything in an archive is an object,” while also drawing attention to the surprisingly common presence within them of a range of artifacts, from inscribed clothing to “objects without writing that become documents exclusively by virtue of context.”¹⁶ The inclusion of such objects in archives of traditional form suggests the need to broaden our understanding of what constitutes an archival document. Here, however, rather than focusing on objects preserved alongside written documents in royal, mercantile, or state archives, we aim to foreground the archival value of objects *in general*:¹⁷ not as supplements to the textual record, but as sources of aesthetic, historical, iconographic, and technical knowledge in their own right that, like the materials preserved in traditional archives, are capable of documenting, preserving, and transmitting information about historical phenomena. Their role in this regard is as relevant to cross-cultural circulation and reception in the past as it is to our own endeavors as historians working transculturally and transtemporally in the present. In the particular context of this volume, we foreground the value of objects as documents capable of illuminating remarkable patterns of transregional circulation and reception that we see as integral to forms of early globalism. Our approach is, perhaps, the mirror reflection of a recent tendency, influenced by contemporary art practices, to view archival materials “as both historical resources and aesthetic objects of contemplation and display.”¹⁸

For us, the archival value of images, objects, and monuments is inseparable from questions of facture, form, and materiality: objecthood and archival value coincide.¹⁹ Until recently the objecthood of traditional archives has often been considered secondary or irrelevant to their informational content. For much of the second half of the twentieth century, a similar tendency manifested itself in our own discipline of art history, reinforced by the dominance of iconographic studies. At their most extreme, these have tended to treat objects and images in much the same way as historians have traditionally treated their textual sources: as vehicles for immaterial meanings to be decoded according to their conformity (or not) to a variety of textual sources, thus sidelining the agency of artisans who might innovate or draw on non-canonical or oral versions of famil-

iar narratives and tales now preserved in written sources.

The value of iconographic analysis is not in doubt. It has, for example, been demonstrated by recent studies of iconographical innovations in western medieval, Byzantine, and Islamic art highlighting the evidence that these offer for cross-cultural or transregional reception in ways that complicate traditional art-historical notions of regional style, or even the passive reception implied by notions of “influence.”²⁰ However, while by no means rejecting the value of iconographic analysis—indeed we make abundant use of such approaches in several of our case studies—we see this as but one among many approaches in the methodological toolbox of the art historian or historian of material culture more generally.

The great appeal of the material turn is precisely its ability to overcome the traditional dichotomies and oppositions between texts, images, and things by emphasizing the need to attend to questions of facture, function, materials, and technique that, far from being secondary to meaning, are intrinsic to it. Rather than reducing our approach to one of hunting elusive textual documentation alone, therefore, we put our primary emphasis on the need for close attention to the artifacts themselves; to consideration of form, materials, scale, and technique. Such analysis offers a starting point, a necessary but not sufficient condition for revealing aspects of making and reception not generally documented in texts and inscriptions, even where these are available, and for considering what work our chosen objects did in the worlds that made them or in which they came to rest.

Even the most fragile of objects can travel over remarkable distances as commodities or gifts, forging commonalities in the material cultures of elites, for example, or unfolding new perspectives for a beholder even outside the elite milieu: an innovative usage, or novel stories not even imagined or intended by their makers. Objects can ignite new ideas, point out novel lineages of thought, and can develop a power they did not have in their original contexts. They can heal, cause miracles, and inspire or participate in new rituals. The mediating capacity of objects can, on occasion, assume dimensions which we would call today “transmedial,” with motifs transmitted between artifacts made in different materials and different contexts, as we shall see in chapters 1, 4, and 5.

In addition, objects that circulate can function as sources of technical information and vectors

of its dissemination. Recent anthropological and sociological approaches to the diffusion and adoption of artisanal techniques have emphasized the central role that artisans play in such phenomena, “because only expert artisans are able to understand the advantages of the properties of a new technique and are therefore in a position to select it.”²¹ In addition, insights into the circulation of artisanal forms of knowledge, modes of making, in early modern Europe and across Eurasia have demonstrated the importance of embodied knowledge, observation, imitation, and repetition as primary vectors for the transmission of technical knowledge that cannot be fully apprehended by textual or verbal description.²² Among the best documented cases from the Islamic world, we might mention the technique of luster, an adaptive use of metallic glazes formerly applied to glass on ceramics. The technique developed in Iraq around the ninth century and was exclusive to the region until the late tenth century, when it appeared in Egypt (and later, Syria and Iran). These developments are assumed to reflect the migration of artisans, since “the technique cannot be copied simply by the observation of objects.”²³

In other cases the transfer of knowledge about modes of making can be associated with the circulation of portable artifacts that acted as *de facto* reservoirs of such knowledge. In the medieval Islamic world, it has even been suggested that textiles functioned as vectors for the transmission of mathematical knowledge.²⁴ The appearance of new techniques sometimes represents an adaptive extrapolation from the experience of objects that have traveled long distances—this may be the case with the niello metalworking technique discussed in chapter 2. Similarly, the deployment of block-printing for the production of amulets in Egypt (and possibly elsewhere) from the tenth century may either represent the transmission of a tradition of xylography that originated in pre-Islamic China, or an adaptation from the block-printing of textiles, many of which traveled to Egypt from Gujarat on the west coast of India.²⁵ The sudden emergence of a major inlaid metalwork industry in eastern Iran around the middle of the twelfth century, on a scale not previously seen, may likewise reflect the sudden availability of silver-inlaid Indian brass sculptures taken as booty or of metalworkers brought westwards following campaigns of expansion into north India, or both.²⁶

In the latter case, the sudden proliferation of a technique that was not previously widespread in this region suggests the mobility of artisans and/or techniques that in other cases has been inferred

from the presence of forms and motifs. The presence of metalworkers trained in the Islamic lands in Constantinople in the tenth century has, for example, been inferred from the form and ornamentation of certain silver vessels.²⁷ Yet, we know surprisingly little about the artisans responsible for crafting such artifacts. In the case studies that follow, we rarely have the names of the artisans who crafted our objects. Even when we do, these do not necessarily tell us much; we know the name of the calligrapher and painter responsible for the manuscript discussed in chapter 6, for example, but little more about him.

The constitution of every archive is governed by mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, often reflecting the articulation and operation of underlying power structures.²⁸ Such archival evidence as survives “has been shaped not only by the exigencies of recording mode and medium, and unforeseen events, but also by human agency, which could include destruction and always involved selection.”²⁹ When it comes to the archival potential of extant objects, mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion often operate according to visibility. These include both the practical capacity to analyze material residues of the past (based on questions of survival, physical access, and so forth) and the particular vision of the historian, with its inevitable blind spots and preferences. There is, in addition, an unavoidable irony in the basic methodological fact that, in order to function as archives in the sense imagined here, objects must be translated into prose through description: another selective and often subjective art.³⁰

The objects that constitute the disparate archive we have assembled for this volume enable us to access traces of use, practices of ornamentation, and technologies of production, among other phenomena. However, less visible (and therefore less accessible) are oral or verbal practices associated with these objects’ function and use.³¹ In addition, while we can trace some of the trajectories followed by the objects that form our case studies, we are often unsure as to whether these were direct or mediated, and of the relative role that maritime and terrestrial networks played in their mobility. In the absence of accompanying meta-data, large parts of their voyages remain invisible. A salutary example involves a group of early Islamic Egyptian and Iraqi textiles preserved in the monastery of Debra Damo in Tigray, Ethiopia, until the second half of the twentieth century when they were sold on the art market and entered museum collections as Egyptian and Iraqi textiles. Were it not for the fact that they had

been documented in their Ethiopian context in the 1930s (part of a scholarly project associated with the Italian Fascist occupation of the country), this phase in their biographies would have been completely obscured.³² Similarly, in the case of the censers discussed in chapter 1, in most cases the site of production is unknown, as is the region in which they were used and kept, buried, or preserved until they were sold. These two cases also exemplify the way in which modern practices of collecting and the market, through which pre-modern artifacts are divorced from any context, devoid of provenance, can produce them as various kinds of “flotsam.”³³

As this suggests, like all archives, our object archives are fragmentary, partial, and constituted both by the operation of human agency and historical contingencies. Whether resulting from the operation of serendipity or human agency, the necessary pre-selection of all archival materials extends to the work of the modern historian of material culture and the role that the objects of our study play in the micro-histories and macro-narratives that we construct. In addition, whether taking a comparative approach or focusing on histories of connectivity, the writing of histories that involve more than one culture or region is challenged by questions of commensuration arising from significant differentials in the natures of the available archives and/or their relative standing within historiographic traditions that have invariably skewed toward Europe. As Bonnie Cheng notes,

Meaningful comparisons between regions requires roughly balanced sets of sources; and despite the vast material, textual, and oral traditions in Africa, China, India, or the Islamic world, these regions have not yet attracted generations of scholars to the study of their art forms in a way parallel to classic traditions in Europe.³⁴

Adding to the methodological challenges, our ability to write histories about and from objects is inevitably shaped by gaps or lacunae in the material record, which may or may not reflect historical realities. The different ways in which these inflect our readings of the object archive are addressed in each of the chapters that follow. As we shall see in chapter 2, for example, such lacunae can also lead to uncertainty about whether we are dealing with independent or related trans-regional phenomena. Similarly, in chapters 4 and 5 the paucity of the extant evidence impels us to ask whether we are dealing with regional continu-

ities in the circulation and production of certain kinds of artifacts and images, or periodic revivals amounting to more temporally disjunct phenomena. These uncertainties need to be acknowledged, and raise questions about chronology and periodization that we will return to in the Conclusion.

Our material archive is characterized by the absence of commensuration in ways that may or may not accurately reflect the constitution of the pre-modern networks to the existence of which it attests. We note, for example, that the abundance of pre-modern Islamic ceramics, metalwork, and textiles that survives in medieval Christendom does not seem to be reflected in a similar range of medieval European materials in the Islamic world or further east. At least for the period we are discussing, with a major focus on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it may well be that goods of European manufacture, including luxury goods, were simply not in the same demand in the Islamic lands as were raw materials, or not in demand to the same extent as Islamic portable objects were in Europe:³⁵ what may be due to the vagaries of survival may also be the product of a wide range of cultural factors of various sorts. Many of the Islamic materials preserved in Europe were once collected in church treasuries or princely collections, both of which often formed the basis of modern museum collections.³⁶ This is true even of outside continental Europe: Georgia or Ethiopia, for example, are regions whose church treasuries contain a remarkable array of portable artifacts that originated in the central Islamic lands (Egypt, Syria, and Iraq), as we shall see in chapter 5.

Adding to the challenge of writing history from such sources is the fact that the materials available to us are often singular; this can reflect the fact that they were rarities or unica at the time of their production, but might also be the result of chance survival, through simply being collected and preserved. Some of the studies that follow deal with examples of objects which appear today as rarities, but were in fact produced in multiples or series; this is the case with the metal vessels discussed in chapters 1 and 4, for example. Other objects among our case studies are unique survivals, archives constituted in singularity rather than multiplicity, as individual components of a more extended corpus. This might seem at odds with the very idea of an archive as a collection, but in our fields, entire historiographic or interpretive edifices have often been built on a very slim evidential base. As a result, a single artifact, image, monument, or text has the potential to radically reconfigure existing landscapes of interpretation,

challenging established canons, historiographies, and cultural imaginaries.

The problem of singularity is amplified when objects travel. Many of the images and objects to be discussed had traveled long distances, adding to their perceived rarity and value in the pre-modern cultures that viewed, used, and copied them. In addition, some of the objects considered here include materials that were mundane in the lands in which they originated, but precious rarities in the distant places to which they traveled. They include skillfully crafted artifacts such as those discussed in chapters 3 and 5: rock crystal carvings included in Christian reliquaries, and gem- or paste-encrusted Indian shields found in Ethiopia. But they also include natural materials such as coconut, or ostrich egg. Artifacts in which such materials are combined (see chapter 3) are quite literally composite, but some of our case studies concern artifacts that are composite in their combination or constellation of images and texts with different histories, and often different origins (see chapters 4, 5, and 6). In some instances, these composite images draw upon iconographies that originated in far-distant lands, but that were made accessible by their presence on portable objects (ceramics, metalwork, textiles) that circulated widely (such as those discussed in chapter 5).

Flotsam

Considering the vagaries involved, the objects that constitute our material archive resemble flotsam, cast on the shores of our own time like the ambergris or coconuts discussed in some of our case studies, carried by the ocean currents until collected as rarities. The metaphor seems especially apt for a book in which maritime connections play a starring role (albeit often in conjunction with terrestrial routes that lay far from the sea), whether those of the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, Gulf, or Red Sea. The metaphor of flotsam also underlines the fact that many of the case studies lack contemporary meta-data; in many cases, even the date and origins or provenance of the chosen artifacts are disputed.

Despite its limitations, the contingencies associated with the idea of flotsam might even be seen as an advantage, imbuing such materials with archival value that does not easily lend itself to the totalizing narratives of linear, synchronic, or teleological history. Since our choice of objects is inevitably governed by contingencies of various sorts, our chosen metaphor of flotsam is intended to mitigate the totalizing implications

of an archive seen as a closed system of empirical facts. The point is well made by the cultural historian Jessica Berenbeim, who writes as follows of the experience of encountering unwritten objects of various sorts preserved in archives of written documents:

That emotional intensity of connection offered by the object itself is then locked in a mutually reinforcing opposition with the ostensibly disinterested context of the archival system. This dynamic relation therefore fuses the subjective and objective states that are, paradoxically, both fundamental to ideas about the production of historical knowledge.³⁷

If, however, the idea of flotsam admits of the contingencies and subjectivities that inevitably govern our approaches to the past through its material traces, it also reminds us that, unlike jetsam—that which is deliberately discarded—flotsam is often not intentionally abandoned, but cast upon the ocean by the vagaries of chance, either by falling overboard or due to shipwreck (with resulting legal ambiguities regarding ownership). Of course, such a metaphor risks marginalizing the operation of human agency, which often determined the trajectories along which our objects traveled as commodities, curiosities, gifts, relics, or souvenirs. Yet even the trajectory of flotsam is marked by the operation of both agency and contingency; flotsam is, for example, subject to the motion of ocean currents until salvaged from the sea or cast upon the shore. Just as the currents that carry flotsam may be shifting and inconstant but rarely random, so the tides that carried most of the materials discussed in these chapters were commercial, diplomatic, or pilgrimage networks along which people, things, and ideas flowed and whose precise trajectories and intensities were determined by a shifting constellation of ecological, economic, and political factors, even if we cannot always fully reconstruct these.

Like flotsam cast upon distant shores, the objects discussed below bear signs of use, and reuse, of transition and transformation, documenting journeys not always recorded in written sources. Just as object archives may be singular or multiple, they may be constituted by the operation of individual or collective agency. Their trajectories may not have been known and their archival potential may or may not have been acknowledged or realized at their point of origin. They nonetheless have a capacity to act as reservoirs of aesthetic, historical, and technical knowledge: networked

histories of making, meaning, and reception constituted relationally. The Islamic metalwork discussed in chapter 2 was not produced to act as a technical exemplar; nonetheless, through a kind of reverse engineering, it served to transmit a particular technique, that of niello, to artisans in Christendom. Conversely, the Islamic metal bowls discussed in chapter 4 were inscribed with a vast array of data concerning their intended function and conditions of production, a knowing nod to their own potential status as material archives of illustrious histories and instrumental knowledge capable of generating copies.

If the objects discussed in the chapters that follow sometimes resemble flotsam, then the activities of the historian resemble those of the beachcomber, whose capacity to offer narrative reconstructions of the past is not only limited by the availability of what is cast upon the shore, but once again by questions of visibility—by the fact that their eyes will inevitably be attuned to certain kinds of forms and materials but not to others, for example. Inevitably, when it comes to collaborative writing over such a wide cultural geography, many kinds of imbalances, differential emphases, and lacunae both reveal and perform themselves. While the tendency to focus on luxury goods or artifacts associated with elites (especially those preserved in European and American collections) reveals itself in almost all of the fields across which we range, this is especially true of art-historical enquiry. The discipline of archaeology has been much more sensitive to the need to take a more expansive approach to historical materials, but this has sometimes led to an emphasis on commercial exchange at the expense of other forms of culture contact. There are also significant variations in the emphases of contemporary scholarship across continents and regions. Recent scholarship on the Indian Ocean region has, for example, criticized the persistent focus on commercial exchange rather than other mechanisms of circulation, including diplomacy and gifting; conversely, studies of textile production in medieval Europe have criticized the focus on luxury goods, museum pieces, and diplomatic exchange at the expense of the consideration of more utilitarian production and commercial factors.³⁸

In addition, the selection of the case studies presented in this volume inevitably reflects choices made on the basis of our own experience, interests, and training, as medievalists and as white Europeans attempting to sketch the outlines of a series of loosely connected histories that extend well beyond Europe. For the philosopher Michel

de Certeau, it is in fact historians themselves who create fragments, the shards from which histories are reconstructed, through a selective treatment of historical materials organized according to periods and taxonomies, which privilege some and marginalize or sideline others, sweeping them aside as historical detritus that cannot be shoehorned into the categories of analysis that (explicitly or otherwise) structure scholarly narratives: dynastic, sectarian, nationalist, and so forth.³⁹ But it is precisely those things that don't quite fit, that are "out of place" according to prevailing taxonomic structures, that offer the richest materials for demonstrating the latter's limits.

A recent study of medieval documents excavated in the Red Sea trade emporium of Quseir al-Qadim captures the necessity of weaving a narrative from what are often random survivals, arguing that in such cases, "there can be no storytelling in the traditional sense; what we witness here is a pastiche of scrambled shreds in search of a narrative."⁴⁰ Similarly, the art historian George Kubler worked in the field traditionally known as "pre-Columbian" art, in which names of artists or craftsmen were generally lacking. There were no primary sources which described the process of making the objects that he studied, nor were there textual sources that described how these objects were used and received. In the face of these challenges, Kubler emphasized the importance of paying attention to form. He introduced a theory of morphology paired with temporality. He suggested that we examine objects as elements within formal chains that stretch over time. Every now and again, a "prime object" will emerge that seems to have been triggered by a significant change in the trajectory of what he termed "the chain of objects." This object could then trigger a change itself. These prime objects enable us, Kubler suggested, to analytically crack open otherwise "voiceless" objects, since they draw our attention to an event, or a moment of contact/rupture, which demands analysis. He wrote that "[t]he history of art in this sense resembles a broken but much-repaired chain made of string and wire to connect the occasional jeweled links surviving as physical evidence of the invisible original sequence of prime objects."⁴¹

The bowls discussed in chapter 4 below seem to have been first produced at a particular moment in the twelfth century, but to have been produced subsequently through a practice of copying existing models. However, they represent a combination of elements drawn from earlier, pre-existing traditions with novel types. They thus attest to Kubler's observation that "every work of

art is a bundle of components of different ages,” or, in the terms of the art historian Georges Didi-Huberman, to the “impure time” of the artwork.⁴² The phenomenon raises significant questions regarding the temporality of such objects, to which we will return in our Conclusion, but it also suggests that it may be more apt—and more interesting—to try to understand certain kinds of objects as part of entangled spatio-temporal networks, rather than products of a single place or time.

Consequently, while Kubler’s focus was on the artist who produced a “prime object,” our own approach shifts the focus from a prime object, master artist, or originary culture to the relational elements of a network whose traces we can glimpse but that we can never fully reconstruct. In what follows, we try to consider the histories (including origins) of our objects in relation to the transcultural networks (commercial, diplomatic, epistemological, religious, etc.) that they articulated and within which they were embedded. We may never fully understand the entire network or fully understand the actions or motivations of the human actors involved in the production, distribution, and reception of these objects; but we can still recover fragmentary elements of these stories by grounding the largely neglected histories of making and reception that are our focus in close attention to the objects themselves: to their formal, iconographic, and technical qualities.

We should emphasize that we are not suggesting a “return to the object” as a self-subsisting artifact, with all the problems of that approach. Nor are we aiming to write the “biographies” of objects, despite the current popularity of these following Igor Kopytoff’s classic 1986 essay on the cultural biography of things.⁴³ Although the context of this essay is often ignored, Kopytoff introduced the concept of object biography to describe the status change of the slave, transformed from a human agent to a commodity, an object of trade.⁴⁴ Inspired by Kopytoff’s essay, archaeologists and art historians have seized upon “biographical” histories of objects as a way of moving beyond a static focus on origins or singular meanings. Within current debates about acquisition and provenance, such a move has attracted criticism for naturalizing the presence of non-Western artifacts in Euro-American museums, as being just one more moment in their unfolding histories.⁴⁵ Less often acknowledged are the ways in which the popularization of object biographies, the exclusive focus on things, ignores or marginalizes the profoundly disturbing implications of Kopytoff’s essay for the degradation and trans-

formation of living human subjects into objects. And yet, it is impossible to divorce questions of commodification, labor, and violence from the histories enabled by objects. Several objects in our case studies may have involved slave labor and/or were traded along routes that, although often celebrated as sources of cosmopolitan connection, were also those along which those coerced into forced labor or slavery traveled, as we shall see in chapter 6.

Rather than championing the idea of the object as either self-subsisting or as the subject for the writing of biographical histories, our starting point is the need to take objects seriously as archival documents capable both of transmitting aesthetic, iconographic, and technical knowledge and of playing a role in the narrative reconstruction of the past. Once again, questions of visibility are central to our capacity to activate the archival value of historical flotsam. The appearance of new kinds of imagery, imported artifacts, or objects locally crafted using non-local materials or new techniques are all useful indexes of the kinds of pre-modern connectivity with which this volume is concerned. However, the methodological role of such “things out of place” in modern reconstructions of pre-modern connectivity depends on a number of subsidiary moves that scholars make, but which are rarely acknowledged explicitly in the analysis: the capacity to distinguish diachronic iconographies from synchronic novelties, for example, or to identify the point of origin of certain artifacts or materials, often based on comparisons provided by earlier published examples of similar things.⁴⁶ Such analysis is always already permeated by a dialectic between sameness and difference—such as the relationship between novelty and rarity, or, conversely, the attenuation of novelty value as certain forms or materials become naturalized through repetition.

It is here that the kinds of unique survivals that appear as flotsam come into their own, providing material testimony to the reality of pre-modern long-distance connections and insights into their nature and effects. Among such flotsam, we might include an Indian ivory datable to the first century CE excavated from the ruins of Pompeii, a sixth-century Himalayan bronze Buddha found at the Viking site of Helgö in Sweden (along with Irish, continental, and Mediterranean artifacts) (fig. 1), or Chinese Buddhist images and sutras on paper and silk excavated from a ninth- or tenth-century grave at Moshchevaya Balka in the Caucasus, possibly belonging to a trader.⁴⁷ Such artifacts not only materialize the abstractions of long-distance networks, but remind us of



Fig. 1 Buddha figure from Kashmir or Swat, 6th–7th century CE, excavated at Helgö in Sweden. Bronze; h. ca. 8.5 cm. Stockholm, Statens historiska museum.

the human agents whose mobility defined them long before the current era of global mobility. In addition to the materials and regions discussed in this volume, archaeological excavations of a Viking longhouse and Viking sagas tell us of travelers from Iceland to Newfoundland long before Columbus. Similarly, the Walsperger map (1449) includes hints at possible earlier maritime voyages to South America.⁴⁸ Such material evidence can sometimes be supplemented by accounts of pre- and early modern travelers from Africa, Asia, and Europe, reminding us of the mobility of certain individuals or classes of people across various kinds of networks linking all three continents.⁴⁹ However, the mobility of such free agents and their capacity to record their travels must be set against the forced mobility of human beings along the same networks and the subaltern labor necessary to sustain them—subjects that will be addressed in chapter 6.

With notable exceptions, analysis of the kinds of archaeological finds that are central to reconstructing such histories of mobility sometimes privileges questions of local identity, function,

and dating in relation to regional histories and historical events, rather than considering the implications of certain materials for histories of transregional circulation and translocal reception.⁵⁰ Certain highly mobile objects assumed new roles in the contexts in which they came to rest, being reimagined and reused in innovative ways that differed from their original function. In addition to the examples discussed in chapter 2, objects from the east that traveled west, we might consider the case of a golden double cup made in the Rhineland in the twelfth century (fig. 2) but excavated from a grave in the Ukraine. Metal cups produced in medieval Europe and Byzantium often traveled remarkable distances eastward. These include a cup made in Europe found close to the Ob' river in Siberia (fig. 3).⁵¹ The vessel is made of gilt silver and niello, a technique producing the blackish sections in the background for the interlaced decoration, which will be discussed at length in chapter 2. Such luxury objects may have traveled as gifts for diplomatic exchange or marriages, as booty in warfare, or as merchandise along trade routes. Objects such as glass vessels, metalwork, items of fashion, or jewelry traveling east or south from Europe are, however, far less documented than objects traveling west or north from the Islamic lands or further east.⁵²

Such objects highlight the need to consider origins but also questions of portability and reception. Art-historical scholarship has tended to focus on the former rather than the latter, giving primacy to the endeavor to re-embed an object “out of place” (either geographically or taxonomically) within its culture of origin. Yet, if both vessels just cited demonstrate how far European objects could in fact travel toward the east, the context in which the former cup was found provides further insights into aspects of reception. The cup was discovered in the coffin of a deceased “prince” of the Qıpchaqs, a nomadic, Turkic tribe on the Black Sea steppe. The special role of the cup was indicated by its placement apart from other vessels and the associated remains of a powdery sediment (perhaps a medicament or pharmacological substance). As Renata Holod and Yuriy Rassamakin point out, while such vessels were likely “initially imported to the steppe themselves as containers or gifts, [they] seem to have been adapted to local usage in the aid of this wounded leader.”⁵³ This kind of reimagining and repurposing of objects and of the imagery that they bear and the technical information that they encode is characteristic of many instances of cross-cultural and transregional reception in the case studies comprising this volume.



Fig. 2 Covered cup from Chungul Kurgan, Ukraine, made in the Rhineland, mid-12th-13th century. Kyiv, Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.



Fig. 3 Bowl of a drinking cup, Europe, 12th century. Silver, silver gilt, and niello; 7.9 × 17.5 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Cloisters Collection), inv. no. 47.101.31.

In the case of the cup found in a burial in the Ukrainian steppe, it is uncertain whether the object traveled to its Black Sea resting place by land or by sea. Since many of the case studies that follow concern maritime and oceanic connections, an interesting counterpart to the kinds of mobile vessels and rare survivals excavated on land can be found in an example of flotsam that we do not discuss in the chapters that follow, but which is highly relevant to our theme. This concerns a ship that sailed between the Levant (then contested between the Seljuq Turks of Iran and the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt) and the ports of the Black Sea, then mostly held by the Christian rulers of Byzantium, and which foundered off Serçe Limanı near Bodrum on the west coast of Turkey around 1025. The ship was carrying glass cullet, a raw material, but also contained everyday artifacts and personal effects. That they ended up on the seabed of the Mediterranean along with the now long-vanished remains of the crew was a cruel

accident of history, a reminder of the reason for the terror that maritime voyages inspired, even in seasoned travelers, and the consequent recourse to protection, a theme to which we will return in chapters 5 and 6.

However unfortunate, by that accident some of the structure and many of the contents of the vessel were preserved, providing a snapshot of eleventh-century trade, interregional contacts, and mercantile mobility. Among the objects recovered from the Serçe Limanı wreck was a 17 cm-long bronze sword hilt (fig. 4). The hilt is decorated with a stylized bird of a very particular type, known in Sanskrit as a *hamsa*, or celestial swan, a creature common in eleventh- and twelfth-century Indian temple carvings (see fig. 170), and once widely diffused in other media.⁵⁴ Painted or carved on portable objects, like many of the mythical creatures we will encounter in our case studies, the *hamsa* often traveled abroad from its Indian homeland, alighting far from home, including

in the highlands of Ethiopia, as we shall see in chapter 5. The long-distance circulations and receptions to which these survivals bear witness may seem surprising, but they were by no means unique. Around the same period, iconographic elements derived from Indian, likely Buddhist or Jain, and even Chinese sources appeared on an ivory casket made for the Byzantine Christian elites of Constantinople.⁵⁵

Since the iconography and imagery of this sword hilt recovered as flotsam from the eastern Mediterranean is clearly Indic in origin, it might reasonably be assumed that the object represents the random survival of an Indian artifact in the medieval Mediterranean. However, despite its imagery, the form of the hilt is consistent with an eastern Mediterranean tradition of weaponry, while scientific analysis of the bronze comprising the hilt indicates an east European or Near Eastern source for the metals from which it was fashioned. The transport of such ores over long distances would not be without precedent: recent research has identified statues crafted in Ife, in Nigeria, as using lead from Lower Saxony, for example, or statues made in Tada, also in Nigeria, as using copper mined in the French Massif Central at the turn of the fourteenth century.⁵⁶

On the basis of this disjunction between iconography, form, and metal content, the excavators of the Serçe Limanı hilt concluded that the hilt was *either* made in India using an unfamiliar form and materials imported from further west, *or* was produced in the eastern Mediterranean by an artisan familiar with Indian iconographies.⁵⁷ On the available evidence, we cannot decide between the two, but one other possibility is that it was made for or by members of an Indian diaspora involved in Mediterranean trade in the eastern Mediterranean during the first half of the eleventh century.⁵⁸ Evidence for the presence of Indians in the medieval Mediterranean has never been systematically studied, but, in addition to trade, warfare and slavery were clearly mechanisms for the circulation of human agents across and beyond Africa, south Asia, and the Islamic world, as we shall see in the chapters that follow.

Both the cups and sword hilt and the contexts in which they were found raise interesting questions about diasporas, displacement, and mobility, and our ability to read or recognize all of these aspects of the past that are germane to our own project. While we may not be able to answer the complex questions raised by such intriguing objects, our capacity to pose them at all not only rests on their chance survival, but also results

from the possibility of deploying a range of analytical tools that effectively compensate for the lack of any accompanying meta-data, including texts or inscriptions.

Globalism

Oscillating between the contingencies of flotsam and the documentary potential of the archive, the objects of the case studies that follow constitute archives of flotsam. This guiding metaphor undergirds an approach that acknowledges a productive tension between the particularities of production, reception, and survival, and the capacity of certain objects to illuminate more global histories of contact and connection. This book is written at a moment when the production of transcultural and transregional histories of circulation and reception is burgeoning. The proliferation of such scholarship under the rubric of early globalism reflects contemporary discourses and experiences of globalization. But it also reflects an increasing awareness of the limitations of the disciplinary frameworks within which we work as scholars of the past: their inability to account for many of the complexities associated with pre- and early modern phenomena of mobility. As medievalists working in different regions, the present authors are familiar with the limits imposed by the epistemological structures within which we operate, too often partitioned according to disciplinary specialties, their limits often set according to region, religion, or modern national boundaries.

Attempts to transcend these limits in writing pre- and early modern global history (including cultural history) have adopted a variety of methods and models, that might broadly be distinguished as a comparative approach (offering a synchronic snapshot that cuts between different geographies, for example) or, alternatively, those more concerned with historical connections and exchanges between cultures and regions.⁵⁹ Each approach has its pitfalls related to historiographic and methodological lacunae or imbalances in the extent and nature of the relevant archives.

In an overview of recent approaches to pre-modern globalism, the art historian Alicia Walker notes that many share a common goal: “to shift scholarly approaches away from a focus on origins and localities as the defining factors of history and toward the consideration of movement across boundaries traditionally defined by language, religion, ethnicity, and geography.”⁶⁰ Our own approaches owe a debt to many of these endeavors, including the idea of connected history with its emphasis on transcultural entanglements,⁶¹



Fig. 4 Sword hilt featuring a *hamsa* (auspicious swan) motif, before 1020 CE, excavated in the Serçe Limanı shipwreck, Turkey. Bronze; l. 25 cm, hilt 17 cm.

and *histoire croisée*, an approach that considers the multiplicity of historical connections and intersections, while also acknowledging the role of the modern historian as a participant in the phenomena that she narrates.⁶²

Early work on the histories of globalism tended to focus on economic and commercial criteria, on the mobility of commodities, financial instruments, and materials. More recently, other forms of mobility, related to diplomacy and gifting, for example, have attracted scholarly attention, while yet other approaches have used the interrelations between religion and trade as a frame for exploring global history.⁶³ Yet even here there are disparities, with certain regions of the world (Africa, for example) seen as contributing little more than natural resources and raw materials, rather than being granted full participation in complex multifaceted histories of circulation and connectivity.

In addition, a notable aspect of recent object-oriented approaches to early globalisms is a consistent focus on early modernity, the period from roughly 1500 to 1750 CE.⁶⁴ In practice, this both privileges the writing of histories for which greater archival resources are available than for earlier periods, and often constitutes such histories as expanded, more global versions of European history. The inevitable foregrounding of European engagements with the world that results from the privileging of early modernity risks compounding a double marginalization of the so-called pre-modern and non-west while simultaneously consolidating and reinscribing Europe in its traditional role, at the center of things. By contrast, our case studies are intended to highlight histories of production, circulation, and reception which do include the region today known as Europe, but only as one region among many. Indeed, Europe was largely irrelevant to the remarkable circuits of exchange and mobility between North Africa, the Horn, the Gulf, and the Indian Ocean discussed in the second part of this book, offering the possibility of a historically and materially grounded approach to decentering or provincializing Europe.⁶⁵

If the presentist thrust of the contemporary humanities risks contributing to the marginalization of the pre-modern in ways that reinforce the hegemony of Euro-American history, it needs to be acknowledged that the discipline of medieval studies is itself marked by significant phenomena of marginalization. In addition to questions of ethnicity, race, and labor, the traditional Christocentric and Eurocentric emphases of medieval studies are relevant here.⁶⁶ The need to acknowledge intercultural connections and shared tastes

is increasingly common in studies of the medieval Mediterranean,⁶⁷ but in many of these Islam comes into focus largely because of its contacts with Christendom. Similar patterns are apparent in scholarship on histories of circulation and connections in other regions. Although historians have outlined the role of the Indian Ocean in a shifting configuration of transregional cultural and economic connections in which Africa, the Mediterranean, and west and south Asia were imbricated before the period of European dominion,⁶⁸ insofar as African involvement is concerned, even here a skewing toward the early modern period is evident. As a result, while early modern Afro-Eurasian, including Afro-Indian, connections have received increased attention in recent scholarship,⁶⁹ similar connections in preceding periods are just coming into focus as a result of growing attention to archaeological and art-historical evidence for contacts between East Africa, the Horn, Arabia, and western India in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, and indeed even at much earlier periods.⁷⁰

Where attempts have been made to construct more coherent, holistic, and inclusive histories of the pre-modern world, these have sometimes reproduced or reinforced boundaries that may or may not be relevant to the materials from which such histories are constructed. Welcome initiatives to integrate the study of medieval Africa into a more global framework have, for example, sometimes been structured along sectarian lines, dealing with histories of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic communities as if distinct, despite the crossings and intersections apparent in the materials discussed in chapter 5. A recent call for medieval Ethiopia to be included within a more global approach to medieval studies notes the need to “consider more fully the place of medieval Ethiopia in the history of early Christian societies, in terms of economic and social history,” in order to bring to light “new histories of connectivity, regional circulation and exchange.”⁷¹ An alternative approach, closer to the one adopted here, might see the cultures of the Horn as marking a significant point of intersection between the Christian ecumene of the East and what has been called Islamicate Eurasia.⁷² Indeed, as we shall see, the materials from Ethiopia suggest that its medieval connections extended beyond both.

The privileging of early modernity reflects and reinforces a kind of literalism resulting from a conflation of universal and global history. This assumes that one can speak of the global in any meaningful sense only after a historically situated consciousness of the entire globe emerged, a

development often equated with the appearance of Europeans on the continents of the Americas (and, later, Australasia).⁷³ This is taken as axiomatic by world systems theorists such as Immanuel Wallerstein, who correlates the origins of the modern world system with the rise of Europe.⁷⁴ By contrast, in a celebrated work published in 1989 the historian Janet Abu-Lughod argued the need to recognize a fourteenth-century “world system” that emerged before the period of European hegemony. For Abu-Lughod, a key factor was the Mongol conquests of west Asia in the mid-thirteenth century, which integrated regions from Anatolia to China within a unified imperial formation fostering the emergence of intersecting or segmented networks of circulation and exchange that facilitated long-distance exchange between merchants and producers.⁷⁵

Recent attempts by archaeologists, historians, and art historians to rethink early globalisms from a material culture perspective have suggested that the phenomenon existed as far back as the early historic period, and included circuits not well represented in Abu-Lughod’s reconstruction, such as West Africa and northern Europe.⁷⁶ Some globalized approaches to pre-modernity have situated themselves in a single century, or a specific year, while others have taken a diachronic perspective, traversing a millennium or more. Some have argued for the existence of a globalized late antiquity marked by artistic interconnections, an incipient globalization in the sixth century, or the existence of a world system in the period between 600 and 900 CE, and so forth.⁷⁷ In addition, some historians have argued the need for a periodization of world history based on the nature and density of cross-cultural interactions as a fundamental criterion of taxonomy.⁷⁸

Rather than insisting on a moment of origin, or thinking of globalism as a single continuous phenomenon, we might think in terms of nodes and networks defined and exploited by forms of connectivities that waxed and waned over time. Writing of the distinction between globalism and globalization, the political scientist Joseph Nye suggested that “[g]lobalism, at its core, seeks to describe and explain nothing more than a world which is characterized by networks of connections that span multi-continental distances.” The distinction acknowledges differences in the scale and speed of modern and pre-modern global connectivity, but avoids insisting on the absolute alterity of pre-modernity on the one hand, and, on the other, asserting a teleology of connectivity that validates contemporary phenomena of globalization. As Geraldine Heng notes,

To attest to the world’s interconnectivity as forms of globality, or as the globalisms of different eras, perhaps better retains a sense of the variety and character of the global connectivities of those earlier eras, without yoking all to a single relationship with contemporary globalization, and forcing a resemblance.⁷⁹

Nye acknowledges that, in contrast to more Eurocentric notions, which insist that the global requires a historically situated consciousness of the entire globe, “[g]lobalism is a phenomenon with ancient roots. Thus, the issue is not how old globalism is, but rather how ‘thin’ or ‘thick’ it is at any given time.”⁸⁰ The challenge, therefore, is to try to reconstruct something of the shifting configurations, the waxing and waning of the networks of various kinds that fostered connectivity. As the historian Alan Strathern reminds us, “[t]he celebration of connectedness in global history writing risks analytical banality unless we are also able to make visible temporal and geographic variations in its extent.”⁸¹

Our case studies tack between the micro-level of analysis—focusing on the objects themselves and the particularities of their reception in specific locales—and the implications of both of these for histories and theories of early globalism that operate at a macro-level. As the historian Carolyn Steedman puts it, in mobilizing their archives to tell tales of the past, historians endeavor “to conjure a social system from a nutmeg grater.”⁸² The present study is not immune to this impulse, selecting six case studies out of the many possible in order to sketch a loose history of African and Eurasian connectivities. But in addition to highlighting the vagaries of all historical reconstruction, the trajectory from object to system also illuminates a relationship between the micro-level of analysis and the macro-level of interpretation. The narratives that we construct from our case studies range in scale from the micro-level of technique and iconography to macro-histories of mobility and reception that illuminate entanglements between cultural geographies sometimes imagined as distinct, if not self-contained. Like many of our objects themselves—assemblages or constellations in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts—our micro-histories suggest the outlines of macro-histories of circulation and reception, connecting what are often imagined as unrelated cultural geographies.⁸³ In this regard, our approach is close to that of historians who have adopted a “micro-spatial” approach to histories of globalism, eschewing the recon-

struction of world-scale phenomena in order to consider “periods when the interlocking of various regional systems did not extend to the globe as a whole.” Significantly, such approaches have acknowledged the value of objects for narrative reconstructions of globalism, whether as indexes of cultural connection, as synthetic residues of global difference, or as imaging the global networks in which they are embedded.⁸⁴

Our selected case studies range in date from late antiquity to the fourteenth century, with a particular focus on what European historians see as the “long twelfth century,” between roughly 1050 and 1250 CE. We are aware that some of the connectivities that we discuss have a longer history, even if the networks that fostered these connections waxed and waned. But our aim is to focus attention on a period that saw a series of major developments across Eurasia and Africa, yet whose importance has often been eclipsed by subsequent developments, whether the emergence of the world system fostered by the Mongol empires, or the globalisms of early modernity. This long twelfth century preceding the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 has long attracted the attention of historians of the Islamic world who have, whether implicitly or explicitly, seen it as marking a self-reflexive intensification of trans-regional connectivity both within the Islamic world and beyond its borders.⁸⁵ In the European sphere discussed in the first part of this book, the period saw growing exchange between al-Andalus, southern Italy, and northern European schools, markets, and courts. Although manifest, with differing intensities and consequences, in different regions, related economic and technological developments included growing productivity of manufacture, farming, and the rise of merchant capitalism, together with increasing urbanization and a growth in scholarly activities intimately related to mobility and textual translation. These significant developments were reflected in an impressive rise in the production of written documents, accompanying and recording economic, technological, and artistic innovation.

The period also saw significant cultural and political transformations that fostered connectivity between northern Europe, the Mediterranean, west Asia, Africa, and east Asia,⁸⁶ including the Crusades, the conquest of northern India by a Muslim dynasty, an intensification of maritime connections between East Africa, the Gulf, and India, and the establishment of an Ethiopian dynasty with direct or indirect connections to these regions.⁸⁷ In addition to the fostering of networks constituted by diplomatic exchange, pil-

grimage, and scholarship (among other spheres), the period also saw the rise of powerful mercantile confederations or guilds in southern India, Egypt, and northern Europe: developments discussed in the relevant chapters that follow.

The period covered by our case studies is particularly difficult to label, especially since different regions have embraced different terms and approaches regarding its periodization. In European art history, this period is often termed “medieval,” indicating its traditional role as an interstice or interlude, a “Middle Age” between classical antiquity and the Renaissance, both traditionally seen (however problematically) as high-water marks of European humanistic culture.⁸⁸ Although some western “medievalists” have rejected the term, recently a case has been made for its continued utility, and even for extending its purview in contemporary scholarship to the history of regions such as West Africa or Ethiopia.⁸⁹

On the other hand, the term “pre-modern” enshrines a concept of the modern which is teleological in its assumptions and profoundly Eurocentric in many of its incarnations, and which often produces the cultures and histories of the past as a negative image of the modern, a necessary foil. Conversely, the teleological thrust of many concepts of modernity serves (implicitly or otherwise) to locate those contemporary cultures seen as inadequately modern in a persistent pre-modern or medieval past.⁹⁰ In this sense, the “pre” of pre-modern is comparable to the “non” of non-Western. Both are forms of negative coding. There is no easy solution to the significant challenges posed by periodization, even when dealing with a single cultural context. In our own writing, we move between the use of the terms “medieval” and “pre-modern,” partly as a way of acknowledging the instability and problematic nature of both terms and the periodization that they imply.

The problem of periodization in cross-cultural contexts is raised in a much more basic way by the use of different calendrical systems in different geographies and regions, challenging any simple opposition between modern and pre-modern periods within a linear concept of historical time.⁹¹ These differences throw into stark relief problems of commensuration closely allied to questions of power and representation in the writing of any transregional history, problems with both spatial and temporal implications. Writing of current phenomena of globalization, the anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot puts the issue succinctly: “Which temporalities do we privilege? Which spaces do we ignore? How do

we set the criteria behind these choices? A world perspective on globalization requires attention to differential temporalities and the uneven spaces that they create.”⁹² In this volume, we make use of just two of the calendrical systems; those, that is, that reflect concepts of temporality most immediately relevant to our own positions as a western medievalist and an Islamicist: the Common Era (CE), or recently secularized western Christian solar dating system, which takes as its starting point the date traditionally given for the birth of Christ; and the *Hijri* system (H) used in the lunar calendar adopted by most Islamic cultures, the year zero of which is the migration of the nascent Muslim community from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. Beyond the macro-level of calendrical systems, however, the selectivity of the choices that we make in representing chronology and temporality are no less apparent at the micro-level of dating our chosen objects, a topic to which we will return in our Conclusion.

Like the images and artifacts that they present, our analyses in the six case studies presented in the chapters that follow attempt to move across and beyond the limits of field and discipline. In various ways, they illustrate how networks of diverse sorts (artisanal, commercial, diplomatic, or pilgrimage networks, for example) cut across and between particular cultural, economic, and political formations, fostering forms of circulation, exchange, and reception that offer rich materials for histories of early globalisms.⁹³

Each of the chapters addresses a different set of practices and processes. Chapter 1 analyzes a corpus of bronze censers with Christian narrative imagery that were highly mobile. It explores connections between Palestine and the eastern Mediterranean along trade routes that extended north to the Caucasus. The chapter highlights connections between healing and narration that inform the dynamic function of the censers, their association with aromatics imported over long distances, and the potential of the evaporating smoke that they produced to connect heavenly and earthly realms. Chapter 2, by contrast, focuses not on mobile objects, but on the movement of artisanal and technical knowledge. Pursuing the route of a specific artistic technique—the making of leaded niello—from the western Mediterranean and Spain to central Europe and Germany, it demonstrates how primary sources describing the technique tell a tale rather different from that told by the surviving objects that exemplify it. Chapter 3 addresses the movement not of a particular class of object, but of a specific material—coconut—combined with Islamic rock crystal in the framing

of a precious relic. It demonstrates how knowledge about the palm tree bearing these fruits combined with Christian cosmological ideas to produce a conceptual and material assemblage of opaque and semi-transparent materials marked by carefully orchestrated contrasts between visible and hidden elements of the resulting whole.

Chapter 4 returns to themes of healing and narration, and the relationship between objects, practices, and rituals, this time in the Islamic lands. It examines an enigmatic series of metal bowls produced at the northern edge of the heartlands of the Abbasid caliphate, in southern Anatolia or northern Iraq. Used for healing and protection, the bowls appear to be a novel kind of commodity, in which long-established amuletic and talismanic technologies were brought into constellation with forms of imagery newly introduced to the arts of the Islamic lands. The monumental relief analyzed in chapter 5 then explores the mobility of some of this imagery beyond the southern limits of the Abbasid caliphate, at its point of intersection with a kingdom ruled by African Christian elites. Carved from the living rock, and so intimately rooted to place, this may seem like an exception to the condition of portability associated with the rest of the artifacts that we discuss. Yet, even here, the details of the carving reveal innovative engagements with imagery likely derived from portable objects that traveled long distances by land and sea, illuminating interconnections between western Asia, south Asia, and the Horn of Africa that have often been occluded both by disciplinary specializations and the lack of written documentation. The sixth and final chapter elucidates the interrelationships between different verbal, visual, and textual modes of narrating such transregional connectivities in the Indian Ocean world. Its subject is an image cycle in a thirteenth-century Iraqi manuscript, which evokes the maritime connections between the central Islamic lands, India, and East Africa. In addition to the insights that they provide into the mobility around the Indian Ocean littoral, the images provide a graphic illustration of the ways in which magico-therapeutic practices similar to those discussed in chapter 4 could be deployed as protection at moments of existential threat, including those occasioned by the sorts of voyages essential to the phenomena of mobility that underlie all our case studies.

The chapters sketch a series of loosely connected histories and cultural geographies whose relations were sometimes direct, sometimes indirect. We seem in some instances to be dealing with examples of transcultural reception, and at

others with the transtemporal expression of parallel traditions with common roots in the world of late antiquity and its legacies to the Christian kingdoms of southern Europe, Africa, and to the Islamic world. In other cases, both are in play. Consequently, the materials analyzed in the chapters that follow not only offer a challenge to bounded notions of cultural geography and spatiality, but invite us to rethink questions of chronology and temporality, a topic to which we return in our Conclusion.

Taken cumulatively, our archives of flotsam suggest a thickening of Eurasian and African connectivity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. We might, therefore, offer the tentative suggestion that the transcontinental connectivities whose histories we will discuss in the following case studies laid some of the foundations for the world system that emerged with the Mongol conquests. It was a system which, as Janet Abu-Lughod reminds us, was foundational for our own era of globalization.⁹⁴

Part 1

From al-Andalus to Germany

Objects, Techniques, and Materials

Chapter 1 Melting, Merchandise, and Medicine in the Eastern Mediterranean

Chapter 2 Knowledge and Craft in Medieval Spain and Germany

Chapter 3 Coconuts and Cosmology in Medieval Germany



Map 1 Locations of the principal sites discussed in chapter 1. Map by Matilde Grimaldi

Chapter 1

Melting, Merchandise, and Medicine in the Eastern Mediterranean

Censers on the Market

In the year 1939, the chemist Friedrich Ludwig Breusch fled Nazi persecution and moved to Istanbul, where he resided until 1971. On his way to work every day, he passed through the city's bazaar, where he purchased seven antique bronze censers (including those shown in figs. 5 and 6).¹ Starting in the late 1800s, over one hundred bronze censers like these, decorated with Christian scenes, surfaced on the art market in North Africa, the Levant, and around the Black Sea. Most were bought by private collectors like Breusch and by museum curators developing their collections, such that a significant number landed in Europe and the United States (see figs. 11 and 12).

These censers were objects on the move: made of highly durable material and weighing relatively little (usually between 540 and 1,470 grams), they were relatively easy to transport and could remain in use for extended periods. The body of these bronze vessels fits comfortably into an adult palm, their upper opening measuring between 8 and 13 cm wide and their height varying between 6.5 and 9.5 cm.² When filled with burning coals and pieces of incense, the vessels became too hot to touch; eyelets extended above (or, for shorter censers, holes placed just below) the upper frame provided openings to which three sets of chains were attached. These enabled a censer to be carried or hung so that its scent could fill the air during religious ceremonies. Indeed, a few examples are still fitted with chains and with a small three-armed mount, also made of bronze (see figs. 11 and 21).

These objects can be dated only to roughly between the sixth to the twelfth centuries, and we do not know where, when, or by whom they were made. In this sense, they have come down to us as a form of flotsam, unmoored from time and place by virtue of their mobility. This lack of knowledge

regarding dating and origins may have contributed to the fact that since 1900 only a handful of scholars have studied bronze censers with Christian scenes. Significantly, most of these researchers have come from marginalized fields or regional “area studies” within the discipline of art history. Other scholars have conducted their research on these censers in countries with limited access to relevant publications and have found themselves hampered by travel restrictions.³

Of the 108 censers preserved in public and private collections in Europe, west Asia, and the United States,⁴ very few have received technical analysis.⁵ All that we know for certain about these bronze censers is that, like the magic medicinal bowls that will be discussed in chapter 4, they seem to have been produced in relatively large numbers. We can neither locate nor date them with certainty, however. They seem to have circulated widely and the process of their circulation as well as their appearance on the market (both when they were made and subsequently) indicates a widespread and enduring interest that has nonetheless failed to shed much light on their origins and initial functions. The censers are most often assumed to have originated in the Holy Land, but this has not been proven conclusively.⁶ Other censers recovered from hoards or excavations in the Holy Land are not decorated with Christian scenes (fig. 7). Furthermore, in the Byzantine world—especially after the sixth century and as opposed to in the medieval West—pilgrimage to the Holy Land played only a minor role in Christian practices.⁷ Most of the censers we are concerned with here were found either in North Africa or the Levant, or around the Black Sea—regions, that is, where Christian communities coexisted with a growing Muslim population. This might support the argument that the censers were primarily used for local liturgical practices



(TOP) *Fig. 5* View of the Visitation and Nativity from a censer with New Testament scenes, 6th–9th century. Bronze; h. 10.8 cm, dtr. 10.9 cm. Basel, Antikenmuseum, inv. no. BRE 644.

(BOTTOM) *Fig. 6* View of the Marys at the tomb of Christ from a censer with New Testament scenes, 6th–9th century. Bronze; h. 10.4 cm, dtr. 11 cm. Basel, Antikenmuseum, inv. no. BRE 643.



Fig. 7 Censers from the Holy Land, Byzantine. Bronze; dtr. 6-10 cm. Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority, inv. nos. 9645.I, 4446.I, 862.M, 40-1235, 52-111, 56-2, 78-1294, 97-4048.



1



2



3

Fig. 8 Photomontage of the narrative friezes of censers BRE 644, BRE 643, and BRE 646 in the Antikenmuseum, Basel (= Billod (1987), pl. 4).



Fig. 9 Drawing of the narrative frieze of censer BRE 644 in the Antikenmuseum, Basel (= Billod (1987), fig. 1).



Fig. 10 Bronze censers with Christian scenes, ca. 600–1200 CE.

in Christian communities but not produced explicitly (or exclusively) for Christian pilgrims.

The censers appeared on the art market in the first decade of the twentieth century, when they entered numerous private and public collections. The lack of written sources relating to their acquisition has severed any potential ties that might identify their site(s) of origin, even through oral transmission in the form of tales told by collectors and vendors. We must therefore rely on the visual analysis of the objects and on the reconstruction of their material and cultural contexts. This is the case with the purchase by Friedrich Breusch—with which we began this chapter—of seven very different censers, containing four, five, or nine scenes, at the Istanbul bazaar in the mid-twentieth century (figs. 8 and 9). They lack any written evidence regarding their origin before appearing on the market.

Tellingly, none of the 108 bronze censers preserved today is an outright copy of another. This is important to note, since their mode of production, namely metal casting, could have lent itself to creating many iterations of a single form from

one mold. Most censers were further worked over after they were cast, when lines, ornaments, and folds were hammered into their surfaces. In terms of fabrication, it seems that either the censers were cast with molds that were destroyed in the process, or that their production was so plentiful that no two versions of the same model have survived, since the objects were disposable. If they were, in fact, products of medieval “mass production,” it is rather ironic that not a single identical pair has survived.

Narrative friezes on the censers presenting episodes from the life of Jesus range from four to twelve scenes per censer (fig. 10). On the basis of their iconography, a date of around 600 CE seems plausible for the earliest of the censers, while some were probably made significantly later.⁸ This early date appears to be corroborated by similarities that the vessels present when viewed in relation to other objects: the positions of Jesus’s crib and Mary in the Nativity scene (see fig. 5); the emphasis on the dove above Jesus in the baptism scene (fig. 11); Jesus’s long tunic in the crucifixion scene (figs. 12 and 19); and the shape of his tomb



Fig. 11 Detail of the Baptism of Christ, from censer with scenes from the life of Christ, 6th or 7th century. Bronze; 11.43 × 12.1 cm. Richmond, VA, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 67.27.

(see fig. 6) appear in paintings of Syrian origin dating to circa 600 CE. The friezes are most frequently compared to two paintings depicting the same scenes: the first is in the Rabbula Gospels, an illuminated manuscript of Syrian origin (fig. 13); the second is the painted lid of a wooden pilgrim casket from Palestine, now in the Vatican (fig. 14). Scenes revealing other similarities can be found on objects such as pilgrim ampullae or flasks (fig. 15); Byzantine amuletic armbands wrought in silver and bronze (fig. 16); and *eulogiae*, small tokens made from the clay of pilgrimage sites (figs. 17 and 18). The iconographical similarities across such a diverse group of objects used by Christians in private devotion, pilgrimage, and public religious ceremonies have strengthened the hypothesis that the earliest bronze censers were made at the same time, around 600 CE, and in the same Syro-Palestinian region; although, as we shall see, the issue is far from clear-cut.

Despite a general consensus on the range of possible dates, not a single censer can be dated with certainty—through contextual information from an excavated site, for example—and the iconographic or stylistic similarities are not strong enough evidence to support a firm chronology. In several cases where more precise dating has been suggested it has been based on comparisons with objects of differing materials, genres, and qualities. Inscriptions in languages such as Arabic, Armenian, Greek, or Syriac were added to some censers, which can aid in solidifying chronologies.⁹ However, the question of whether this occurred immediately after casting or significantly later is a matter of scholarly debate.¹⁰ Moreover, few of the dozen or so inscriptions display script characteristics that can be dated by paleographic analysis. Two early inscriptions that were probably contemporary to their production are found on censers preserved today in Geneva



Fig. 12 Detail of the Crucifixion, from a censer with scenes from the Life of Christ, 6th or 7th century. Bronze; h. 8.3 cm, dtr. 11 cm. Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 15/69.



(TOP RIGHT) Fig. 13 Easter scenes (the Crucifixion, Marys at the empty tomb, and the risen Christ) from the so-called Rabbula Gospels, Syriac, ca. 586 CE. Parchment. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plutei 1.56, fol. 13r.



(BOTTOM) Fig. 14 Inside view of the painted lid of the so-called Vatican pilgrim casket from the treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum, possibly Syria, late 6th or early 7th century. Wood, gold foil, and encaustic; 24 × 18.4 × 1 cm. Vatican City, Museo Sacro, inv. no. 61883.2.1-2.

Index

Note: Page numbers in italic type indicate illustrations.

A

Aachen, 95, 98
Abbasid caliphate, 2, 18, 123–124, 130, 138, 141–143, 194, 202, 205, 206, 211, 219, 233
‘Abd al-Rahman III, 73
Abraha and Aṣṣbeha church, Wuqro, Tigray, Ethiopia, 185, 185, 186
Abu’l-Qasim, 55, 56
Abu-Lughod, Janet, 16, 19
Abu Sayfayn church, Fustat, 168, 169
Abyzou, 157, 159, 171. *See also* Alabasdrīa; Lamashtu
Adam, 101, 103, 108
Aden, 184, 186, 189, 203
Adomnan, 239n74
Afghanistan, 53–54, 69, 82, 85, 95, 189, 202
Africa, 15, 17
African diaspora, 187–188, 203
Africans, textual and visual representation of, 197–198, 201–202, 207–208, 210. *See also* Ethiopians
agency: artistic, 4, 194, 207, 225; cumulative, 232; human, 5–7, 197; network conception of, 231; of objects, 1
‘ajā’ib (mirabilia) genre, 194, 205–206
Alabasdrīa, 156, 157, 159, 162. *See also* Abyzou; Lamashtu
alchemy, 122
Aleppo: 74, 223, 240n45, 250n25; Serpent Gate, 125, 125, 138, 157
Alexandria, 32, 103, 161, 186, 230
Ali, Daud, 211, 212
alphabets, esoteric, 124, 233, 246n146
altar: of Infanta Sancha Raimúndez, 73–75, 74, 77; altars for display of treasures, 89, 100, 100
Ambar, Malik, 209
ambergis, 7, 218–219
Amid, drawing for a door knocker of the Artuqid palace at, 125–126, 126, 127
amulet-case, 57, 57
amulets: 3, 5, 18, 28, 32, 36, 57, 115, 118, 122, 123, 125, 128, 131–134, 133–135, 136, 138–141, 143, 145, 157–158, 158, 159, 160–161, 161, 194, 215, 217–219, 223–224, 235n7; showing holy rider, 157–159, 158, 159. *See also* engraved amulets
Anatolia, 16, 18, 118, 123–126, 128, 133–135, 138, 140, 145, 147, 151, 156–157, 159, 164, 185, 224
al-Andalus, 1, 2, 17, 53–54, 58, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 75, 82–83, 85, 141, 162, 240n37, 250n27
Andalusia. *See* al-Andalus
Anderson, William, 32
Andrew, Saint, 101, 106, 107
Anselm, bishop of Bethlehem, 74–75
Anthony, hermit saint, 162
Antioch, 240n30
Antoninus, 49
Apollonius of Tyana. *See* Balinus
Arabic, 28, 31, 42, 55–57, 60, 66, 68, 71, 73, 92, 105, 108, 116, 118, 123, 129, 131, 134, 140, 143–145, 158, 160, 170–171, 182–186, 188, 197, 199, 205–207, 217–219, 221, 224
Aramaic, 115, 116, 124, 140, 141, 157, 160, 243n14

archives: historiographical significance of, 3; objects as, 5, 51, 142, 147; objects in, 4; systems of inclusion/exclusion in, 5; totalizing character of, 7
Arculf, 239n74
Armenia, 33, 125, 237n18
Armenian, 28, 105, 237n9
Armojand, Said Amir, 236n85
aromatics, 219. *See also* incense; smell
art history: contingencies and subjectivities in, 6–10, 38, 230; early modern, 15; emphasis on elites and courtly milieu in, 2, 3, 8, 231, 233; high vs. low in, 2, 231; network-based approach to, 9, 229–233; object-oriented practices in, 1, 4, 9; totalizing narratives in, 7
Artuqids, 125–128, 133, 138, 193, 197, 224. *See also* Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan
Asmara, Eritrea, Saint Mary church, 153, 155, 182
Assman, Jan, 239n73
Assyrian antiquities, 133, 224
astrolabes, 215, 219
astrological imagery, 118, 125–127, 129, 134–136, 145, 219, 233. *See also* zodiacal signs
Attarouthi Treasure, 35, 37, 40, 41
Augustine of Hippo, 103, 241n60
Augustus (Roman emperor), 95
automata, 125–126, 197, 202, 211
Axum, 151, 153, 165, 189
Aydhab, 249n163
Ayyubids, 115
al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt, 187
al-‘Aziz billah, Fatimid caliph, 162

B

Baghdad, 17, 123–124, 125, 130–131, 138, 141, 143, 145, 184, 193, 202, 207, 209, 211–212, 220, 230, 233, 244n51; Talisman Gate 138, 139, 160
al-Baghdadi, ‘Uthman, artisan, 122
Bahram Gur, 197
Balicka-Witakowska, Ewa, 147
Balinus (Apollonius) of Tyana, 122, 134, 221
al-Balkhi, Abu Ma’shar, 233
Bama, 202–203. *See also* ben Yiju, Abraham
Bargello quadruped, 66, 67
Basel, 5, 6, 8, 9, 19, 22, 23, 25b, 35, 36, 38, 50–51, 99, 101, 237n4, 237n14
Basra, 203
Bawit, Egypt, 156, 157, 160, 161, 162
Belting, Hans, 239n75
ben Yiju, Abraham, 189, 203
Berbera, 189
Berenbeim, Jessica, 7
Berengaudus of Ferrières, 108
Berlekamp, Persis, 135–136
Berthelot, Marcellin, 57
Beta Maryam, Lalibela, Ethiopia, 147–153, 148–150, 152, 156–157, 160–162, 162, 165–171, 166, 172, 173, 181–182, 181, 184–186, 189
Bethlehem, 50, 74, 75, 239n79
bezoar stones, 104, 136
Billod, Carole, 237n8
bīmāristān (hospital) of Nur al-Din ibn Zangi, Damascus, 118, 224, 226
Black Sea, 10, 12, 23, 32
block-printing, 5
Bolesław IV, Polish king, 79

boswellia plants, 41, 43. *See also* frankincense
bowls, 10, 12, 12, 82, 83. *See also* magic-medicinal bowls
Breusch, Friedrich Ludwig, 23, 27, 46–47
Buddha, 103; statuette from Kashmir or Swat, 9, 10
Buddhist images and sutras, 9
al-Buni, Ahmad, 134–135
Byzantium: censers in, 33; iconography in images from, 126, 132, 147, 151, 183, 212, 220, 224; medical use of incense in, 42; niello in, 56, 81–83; and pilgrimage, 23, 32; plate from 55, 55; trade involving, 10

C

Cairo, 2, 111, 115, 124–125, 140, 140, 164, 187, 205, 207, 219
Cairo Geniza, 2, 3, 92, 140, 141, 202, 217, 241n14, 243n14, 243n23
calendrical systems, 17–18
camphor, 92
canon table, Zir Ganela Gospels, 170, 171
Capella Palatina, Palermo, 197, 212, 213
Capua, 71
Carboni, Stefano, 60, 66
caskets: from Colegiata de San Isidoro, 60, 65, 69, 81; from the so-called Harari hoard, 69, 69, 71; of Hisham II, 70, 70 (detail), 71; of Sadaqa ibn Yusuf (León silver casket), 53, 54, 54 (detail), 56, 58, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 77, 81
Caspian Sea, 217
Castile, Kingdom of, 73
Caucasus, 9, 18, 183, 191
cedulae, 101, 102
centaurs, 157, 162
Central Asia, 41, 82, 92, 191
ceramics. *See* luster ceramics; *mina'i*
censers, 6, 18, 22–51, 25; analysis of, 23, 31–32; on the art market, 23, 27, 236n4; bases of, 35, 36, 37; from cathedral in Old Dongola, Nubia, 41, 42; circulation and reception of, 23, 31, 36; damage and repair to, 36; dating of, 23, 27–28, 33–34, 38–39, 49, 51, 237n18; fabrication and production of, 34–35; form of, 35, 38–41, 46; hexagonal, 38–39, 39, 40, 45; iconography of, 27–28, 33, 41, 49; imprints on, 36; incense burned in, 41–51; inscriptions on, 28, 31; lack of written sources on, 27, 31; location of fabrication of, 32, 33; material of, 33; with Nilotic scenes, 47–48, 48; pilgrims associated with, 31, 32, 36, 49–50, 237n6; Roman, 38; scholarship on, 23, 31–32, 36; silver, 35, 38; size of, 23; Syro-Palestine proposed as source of, 28, 33, 38, 39, 237n6; temporalities of, 47–51; use of, 23, 38, 41–46, 49–51. *See also* censers with Christian scenes
censers with Christian scenes, 23, 27–28, 27, 33–36, 34, 38–39, 41, 46–51, 51; Annunciation, 33; Baptism of Christ, 23, 27, 28, 36; Crucifixion, 23, 27, 29; flight to Egypt and Crucifixion, 27, 31, 35, 39; Marys at the tomb of Christ, 23, 24, 35, 39; narrative friezes, 26, 27, 34–35, 39, 41, 50; Visitation and Nativity, 23, 24, 27, 35, 39, 50; Visitation of Christ's tomb, 35, 36; youthful Christ with a cruciform halo, two archangels, and crosses, 35, 37, 40, 41
center-periphery model, 41, 109, 230–231
Certeau, Michel de, 8
Ceylon. *See* Sri Lanka
chalice and paten from Trzemeszno, 77, 78, 78 (detail), 79
cheetahs, 177, 180
Cheng, Bonnie, 6
Chennai, 107, 180
childbirth, magical assistance/protection for, 122, 127, 133, 145, 194, 215, 217–219
chimeras, 149, 151, 153, 157, 162, 165–170, 183, 191, 212–213, 220, 227, 232

China, 5, 6, 16, 101, 187, 205–206, 230
Christian practices: censers as source of information on, 36, 38, 41–46, 48–51; coconut and rock crystal composite objects and, 87, 92, 95, 99–108; Islamic objects and iconography repurposed for, 87, 98–99, 147, 157–159, 162–167, 170–171, 183–186; niello and, 54–55, 77–85; significance of material in objects for, 98; temporalities of, 48–49, 51
chronology and dating, 6; of censers, 23, 27–28, 33–34, 38–39, 49, 51, 237n18; of Ethiopian rock-cut churches, 151; of Islamic magic-medicinal bowls, 113, 115–118, 122–124, 138, 145; network conception of, 231–232; niello objects, 57. *See also* periodization
Chungul Kurgan. *See* Ukraine
ciborium, 105–106, 106
circulation and reception of objects: Africa-India connections and, 225; censers, 23, 31, 36; coconuts, 92, 95, 104; composite objects, 99, 104; contexts for, 8, 15; Ethiopian iconography and objects, 147–189; information transmitted through, 4–5; Islamic magic-medicinal bowls, 115; material evidence of, 1, 9–10; niello technology, 8, 18, 53–85; repurposing and reevaluation during, 2, 10, 87, 98–99, 224, 230; scholarship on, 229–233; technology transfer, 4–5, 53, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 81–83, 85; transcultural and transregional, 2–4, 9, 13, 15, 17–18, 51, 87, 99, 147, 154, 165, 169, 183–184, 187–189, 210–213, 219, 225, 227. *See also* maritime voyages
Cividale del Friuli, 95, 107
Cizre, door knockers from the Great Mosque of, 125, 126, 131
Claussen, Peter Cornelius, 98
Cleopatra, 141
Clifford, James, 229
coconut (*nux indica*), from *Compendium salernitanum*, 92, 94
coconut-cup from the treasury of the archbishops of Salzburg, 95, 97, 104
coconut reliquaries: Hildesheim, 95, 96, 107–108; with miniature of Saint Mary Magdalene, 95, 97, 99, 107–109; Münster goblet, 87, 88, 89, 89 (detail), 91–92, 95, 99–101, 103, 105–109, 113
coconuts, 18; circulation and reception of, 92, 95, 104; in composite objects, 87, 89, 91–92, 95, 99–101, 103–108; healing power associated with, 99, 104; meanings and associations of, 91, 92, 95, 101, 103–105, 108–109; Paradise associated with, 101, 103–105, 108–109
coconut tree, from *Codex sinaiticus graecus*, 92, 95
Cologne, 88, 92, 95, 95, 98, 242n32
Comoros, 87
composite objects, 7; circulation and reception of, 99, 104; meanings of, 91, 99, 101, 103–109; temporalities of, 224, 227; uses of, 87, 89, 91, 95, 99–101, 104; visible and invisible aspects of, 89, 91, 106–108. *See also* Islamic magic-medicinal bowls: as assemblages
Constantinople (Istanbul), 5, 23, 27, 32, 44, 46, 113, 114, 152, 183, 204, 230, 237n4, 238n34, 250n32
Cooper, Frederick, 229
copies and originals: censers, 27, 33, 41; Islamic magic-medicinal bowls, 8, 113, 123–124, 138, 143, 145; niello, 73–77
Coptic art, 48, 144, 156, 157, 160–162, 164, 167, 165, 169
Coptic language and texts, 105, 139, 171, 182
Córdoba, 53, 58, 71, 73
Corippus, 44
Cosmas, Saint, 45, 46
Cosmas Indikopleustes, 92, 241n16
Cosmos/cosmological, 18, 32, 108, 137, 139. *See also* astrological imagery; zodiacal signs
crocodiles, 149, 151, 157, 160, 160–162, 170
Cross of Lothair, 95

crozier from the Cathédrale Saint-Pierre-de-Lisieux, Limoges, 82, 84
crucifix, the so-called Herimann-Ida-Kreuz, 98, 98
crystal. *See* rock crystal
cuirass, 173, 175, 187

D

Dahlak archipelago, 186
Damascus, 31, 44, 115, 122, 124, 128, 138, 141, 212, 224, 244n51
Damian, Saint, 45
Damietta, 167
Debra Damo, Tigray, Ethiopia, 5–6, 184, 235n32
Debra Selam Mikael, Tigray, Ethiopia, 248n105, 248n106
Deccan, 187, 209
Deir el-Bahri, 238n41
Delft tiles, 182
demons, 115, 116, 128, 129, 157–160
De Winter, Patrick, 79
Didi-Huberman, Georges, 9, 147, 224, 232–233
diffusionist theories, 41, 115, 182, 230. *See also* circulation and reception of objects; technique and technical knowledge: transmission of
Diocletian, 247n50
Dioscorides, 42–43; *De materia medica* 215, 216
diplomatic gifts, 10, 17, 83, 149, 184, 187
dogs, 115, 116, 118, 128–133, 137
Dongola (including Old Dongola), Nubia, 41, 42, 159, 160, 230
double chalice: 95, 97, 104, 107; the so-called *Johannisweinpokal*, 95, 97; from the treasury of the archbishops of Salzburg, 95, 97, 104
double cup, 105, 105
dragons, 105–106, 124–127, 137–139, 145, 153, 154, 157, 164, 167
dragon-tailed sphinx, 166, 167
drawings, for an amulet or seal, 133, 135; of a boy cured of a demon, 128, 129, 131, 133; of an equestrian falconer, 163, 163; of a magic-medicinal bowl, 114, 118, 122, 130, 138, 219; of a wall painting in Chapel 17, monastery of Bawit, 156, 157
Drpić, Ivan, 50

E

East Africa, maritime connections with India, 18, 186–187, 189, 194, 196–197, 202–203. *See also* Ethiopia; Shanga; Swahili coast
Egeria, 44, 49
Egypt, as source for Ethiopian iconography and objects, 153, 157, 159–169, 182, 184–185. *See also* Bawit; Cairo; Deir el-Bahri; Fatimid Egypt; Mamluk Egypt
elephants, 149, 151, 153, 162, 171, 173, 180–181, 197, 199, 200, 201, 211, 248n105, 248n106
enamel, enameled, 55, 104, 107–108, 184, 187
engraved amulets: gem with a scorpion, 143; plaque 144, 145, 161; showing the child-killing demoness Lamashtu, 133, 134; showing a holy rider, 132, 133
Eptingen Chalice, 101, 104
Eritrea, 151, 153, 155, 165, 182, 185, 186
Essen, 95
Ethiopia and rock-cut churches, 6, 15; archer imagery in, 171, 173; circulation and reception of iconography and objects in, 147–189; dating of, 151; engagement with Egypt, 153, 157, 159–169, 182, 184–185; engagement with India, 171–181, 186–187, 189; engagement with Islamic lands, 147, 157–159, 162–167, 170–171, 183–189; falconry imagery in, 162–165; iconography of, 12–13, 147–154, 157–171; Islamic perceptions of the people of, 202, 207; scholarship on, 153; Sisinnios (Susenyos) and, 157–160; sphinx

imagery in, 165–171. *See also* Lake Tana; Lalibela; Tigray
Ethiopians, textual and visual representations of, 187–189, 202–203
Ethiopic. *See* Ge'ez
Ettinghausen, Richard, 203
eulogia tokens, 28, 31, 32, 42, 43, 44, 45, 49
Eurasia, 5, 15, 17, 126, 153
Eve, 101, 103, 108

F

Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan, 126, 127, 138, 224
al-Falahi, Abu Mansur ibn Yusuf, 60
falcon, 151, 162–165, 170, 185, 247n73
Farago, Claire, 231
Fatimid caliphs: al-'Aziz billah, 163, 235n36; Mu'izz li-Din Allah, 246n146; al-Mustansir billah, 60
Fatimid Egypt, 2, 12, 53, 60, 66, 69, 71, 185, 219
Fauvelle, François-Xavier, 183–184
Ferrara, Palazzo Schifanoia, 233
fish, 47, 75, 90, 101, 151, 160, 162, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170–171, 188, 189, 212, 239n70
flask, 28, 32, 42, 44, 51, 52, 56, 56, 57, 57, 66, 69, 83, 84, 89; for rose-water (St. Petersburg bottle), 68, 69, 71, 81
Florence, 66, 95
flotsam, as metaphor, 7–13, 23, 32, 82, 99, 142, 180
fountainhead in the shape of a stag, 66, 66
frankincense, 32, 41, 43–44, 47, 49, 92
Frazer, James, 245n78
Freiburg, 95, 96, 99, 107, 108, 109
Fritz, Rolf, 92, 99–101
Fustat: 3, 92, 140; Abu Sayfayn church, 168, 169; chapel of Mar Giorgis, Church of Sitt Barbara, 164, 165

G

Galen, 137
Ge'ez, 105, 159, 160, 170, 187, 189
Geisberg, Max, 87
Gell, Alfred, 43
gems, magical efficacy of, 130, 136, 143–145, 158, 218, 245n115. *See also* lapidaries
Geniza. *See* Cairo Geniza
Genoa, 87, 95
George of Antioch, 240n30
Georgia, 6, 32, 33, 162
Gerasa. *See* Jerash
Germanos I of Constantinople, 43–44
gesso, 34, 246n12
Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm (Goal of the Sages), 136, 141
al-Ghazi/Gran, Ahmad, 186
Ghaznavid empire, 69, 85, 189
giraffes, 149, 197, 198
Giunta, Robert, 117
glass: 5, 10, 12, 55, 57, 90, 107, 173, 184, 187; enameled or gilded, 184, 187
globalisms, 2–4, 13, 15–17, 19, 230–231
Gniezno, 77, 79
Grabar, André, 32, 237n6
Grabar, Oleg, 138, 194, 203, 211
Greek, 28, 41, 55–57, 92, 105, 124, 130, 139, 141, 157–161, 218, 237n7
Gregory of Tours, 45
griffins, 66, 67. *See also* chimeras
Gröninger, Gerhard, 100

Gudea of Lagash, 224, 225
Gujarat, 5, 6, 205, 210
Gulf, Arabian or Persian, 7, 15, 17, 105, 196, 205, 206, 219, 220, 224, 230
Gunaguna, Eritrea, wooden door with eagle ornament, 184, 185
Gyllou, 157

H

hadith, 140
al-Hakam II, Umayyad caliph, 71; pyxis, 58, 58, 71
Halebid (Dorasamudra), Karnataka, India, 177, 179, 179; Nagaresvara temple, 176, 176
Hamadan, 134
al-Hamadhani, Badi' al-Zaman, 191; *Maqāmāt*, 215, 217, 218
al-Hamdani, 56
hamsa (celestial swan), 12–13, 14, 177
Hanseatic League, 92, 95
Harari hoard, 69, 69, 71
al-Harawi, 125
al-Hariri, *Maqāmāt*, 143, 191–227; iconography of, 194, 196–197, 199, 201, 209, 211–214; images from, 142, 192, 193, 195, 196 (detail), 203, 204 (details), 208, 209 (detail), 211 (detail), 212 (detail), 214 (detail), 217 (details); image-text relationship in, 194, 195, 213–214; intertextuality of, 194, 209–211, 219; magic as theme in, 215–219; scholarship on, 194, 197; temporality of, 219–224; wonder as theme in, 205–207, 211–215. *See also* al-Wasiti, Yahya
harpies, 145, 166, 170, 191, 196, 212–215, 220, 224, 227, 252n141
Harran, 120, 202
healing. *See* medicine and healing
healing scrolls, Ethiopian, 159, 160, 162, 249n170; scroll showing Saint Susenyos spearing a demon, 160, 160
heart-shaped box with relics of Saint Pelagius, and lid, 71, 72, 73
Hebrew, 140, 141, 233
Helgö, Sweden, 9
Helms, Mary, 183
Heng, Geraldine, 16
Henry II (Holy Roman emperor), 98
Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, 79, 81
Heraclius (Byzantine emperor), 56
Heraclius, *De coloribus et artibus omanorum*, 56–57
Heribert, Saint, 95
Hijaz, 44. *See also* Mecca
hijri system (H), 18
Hildebert of Tours, 79
Hildesheim, 89, 95, 101, 107–108, 242n32
Hillenbrand, Robert, 207
Hims, scorpion-man at the gate of the Friday Mosque of, 221, 222, 223
hippopotamus, 161
Hisham II, casket of, 70, 70 (detail), 71
Hittite antiquities, 223
Hodgson, Marshall, 236n85
Hoffman, Eva, 99
Holod, Renata, 10
holy riders, 133, 157–159, 158, 159, 161–162
Horton, Mark, 1, 187
Horus on the crocodiles, 145, 161, 246n156
Hoysala rajas, 173, 176, 179, 210
Hoysalesvara Temple, Halebid, Karnataka, India, 177, 179, 179
humoral theory of medicine, 130, 137
hydrophobia, 130, 130–131

I

Ibn 'Ali, 'Isa, 130–131, 142
Ibn Battuta, 99
Ibn Butlan, 202
Ibn Jarir, Bilal, 186
Ibn al-Jawzi, Abu'l-Faraj, 202
Ibn Jubayr, 249n163
Ibn Khaldun, 136
Ibn Khurdadhbih, 44
Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, 133
Ibn Sarabiyun, Yahya, 130, 137
Ibn Sayqal, 186
Ibn Shaddad, 125
Ibn al-Shihna, 223
Ibn Wahshiyya, 131, 136, 241n14
Ibn Yunus, Muhammad, artisan, 122
Ibn Yusuf, Sadaqa, 60
Ibn Yusuf al-Tifashi, Ahmad, 218
Ibn Zangī, Nur al-Din, 115
icons, 36
Imam Dur, tomb of, 212, 213
incense: censers for burning, 41–51; medicinal and healing properties of, 41–44, 50–51, 136. *See also* ambergris; boswellia; camphor; frankincense; sandalwood
India: artistic contacts with, 210–211; Christianity in, 180; Ethiopian repurposing of objects from, 171–181, 186–187; maritime connections with Islamic lands and East Africa, 18, 186–187, 189–227; marvels associated with, 211–212; Paradise associated with, 101, 103, 107–109; as source of images in the *Maqāmāt*, 194; visual representations of people from, 197, 199, 202, 210. *See also* Chennai; Gujarat; Kerala; Malabar; Mumbai; Quilon; Sanjan
Indian diasporas, 13, 187, 203
Indian Ocean, 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 15, 18, 171, 179, 180, 184, 186, 187, 189, 191, 194, 196–197, 203–206, 209–210, 212, 219, 241n14, 249n155, 249n164
Indians, textual and visual representations of, 182, 192, 193, 195, 196–197, 199–201, 202, 210
Indian slaves 202
Infancy of Jesus, 128
Infanta Sancha Raimúndez, altar of, 73–75, 74, 77
influence, art historical concept of, 4, 227, 231
inlaid metal, 5
intertextuality, 194, 209–211, 219
Iran: animal imagery in, 132–134, 139; illustrated books from, 197; magic-medicinal bowls, 143; Sasanian art of, 153
Iraq: 2, 5, 6, 18, 60, 87, 115–116, 118, 123–126, 131–133, 135, 137–138, 139, 140, 143, 145, 153, 162, 164, 167, 185, 187, 191–197, 201–203, 205–206, 210, 212, 213, 218–221, 224; amulets from, 132–133; illustrated books from, 193–194, 203, 215; India's trade with, 219; lusterware from, 5, 205; magic-medicinal bowls, 18, 115–116, 118, 122–125, 140, 143, 145. *See also* Baghdad; Basra; Jazira; Wasit
Islamic magic-medicinal bowls: 114, 117–118, 120, 121, 122, 136, 138, 219; animal imagery on, 113, 116, 118, 126, 128, 130–132, 136–138; as assemblages, 113, 138, 140, 145; attestations to efficacy of, 115, 118, 123–124, 127, 136–143; bearing the image of the Ka'ba, 117, 117, 118, 136, 219, 220; composition of, 118; copies among, 8, 113, 123–124, 138, 143, 145; dating of, 113, 115–118, 122–124, 138, 145; history of, 8–9; iconography of, 117–118, 122, 124, 126, 131–138; inscriptions on, 8, 113, 115, 118, 122, 124, 127–130, 138–140, 144–145; makers of, 122; medicinal and healing properties of, 113–145; origins of, 113, 115, 117–118,

- 123–124, 128, 133, 137, 138, 143, 145; other objects compared to, 124–127, 131–145; parallels to, in other media, 122; possible antecedents of, 115–117; production of, 117, 126; size of, 118, 128; temporalities of, 117, 138–140; textual references to, 115; uses of, 116
- Islamic world: censors in, 33; Christian repurposing of objects/ iconography from, 87, 98–99, 147, 157–159, 162–167, 170–171, 183–186; Ethiopian engagement with, 147, 157–159, 162–167, 170–171, 183–189; iconographic revivals in, 220–224; maritime connections with India, 18, 186, 189–227; marvels associated with, 211; medical use of incense in, 42; niello in, 54, 56–58, 60, 66, 71, 73, 81, 83, 85; objects associated with, 235n36; rock crystal in, 87; sphinx imagery in, 166–171, 220; trade involving, 6, 10, 83. *See also* Islamic magic-medicinal bowls
- Israel, 33. *See also* Palestine
- Istanbul. *See* Constantinople
- ## J
- al-Jahiz, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (Book of animals), 197, 198
- Jaspere, Jitske, 74–75
- Java, 92
- Jayakeshi I, Kadamba raja, 187
- al-Jazari, Badi' al-Zaman, *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, 125–126, 126, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 211
- Jazira region, 118, 123–126, 128, 133, 134, 137–139, 145, 157, 164, 193, 202, 224
- Jerash (Gerasa), Jordan, 45, 46
- Jerphanion, Guillaume de, 237n6
- Jerusalem, 7, 18, 44, 50, 57, 69, 109, 123, 187, 239n79; Gethsemane, 106; Holy Sepulchre, 44, 49, 50, 51
- Jesus Christ: blood of, 79, 81, 87, 92, 99, 101, 104, 109; healing power associated with, 128, 129; human and divine nature of, 44; lamb as symbol of, 74, 87, 92, 99, 101, 103, 109; narrative friezes relating the life of, 27, 33, 36, 38–39, 41, 43, 47, 49–51; power of, 106; resurrection of, 79
- John Geometres, 46
- John the Baptist, 42, 50, 101
- Joseph, prophet, 207, 209–210
- Judeo-Arabic, 140
- Justinian, 44
- ## K
- Ka'ba, 69, 117, 117, 118, 135–136, 219, 220
- Kadamba rajas, 179, 187
- Kamień Pomorski (formerly Cammin), 95, 107
- Karimi, 203, 220
- al-Kashkari, 130
- Kebra, Masqal, 189
- Kellia, 161
- Kerala, 180, 210
- Khusrau, Nasir-i, 202
- Kilito, Abdelfattah, 194
- Kitāb al-bayzara*, 162
- Kitāb al-diryāq* (Book of theriacs), 131, 132, 137–138, 137
- Konya, 140
- Kopytoff, Igor, 9
- Kubler, George, 8–9, 123
- Kufic script, 31, 60, 66, 185, 186, 224. *See also* Linear Kufic
- Kumluca, 238n32
- ## L
- Lake Tana, Ethiopia, 182, 182
- Lalibela, Ethiopia: Beta Maryam, 147–153, 148–150, 152, 156–157, 160–162, 162, 165–171, 166, 172, 173, 181–182, 181, 184–186, 189; Savior of the World (Medhane Alem) church, 147, 173, 174, 180, 180, 186–187; Yemrehanna Krestos church, near Lalibela, 153, 155, 170–171, 171, 173, 177, 177, 178, 179–180, 188, 189, 191
- Lalibela, King, 147, 189
- Lamashtu, 133, 134, 157
- La Niece, Susan, 56
- lapidaries, 2, 108, 130–131, 136, 143–144, 158. *See also* gems
- lapis lazuli, 95, 98
- Latour, Bruno, 229
- Lebanon, 33, 187, 189, 238n31
- León, 39, 40, 53–54, 56, 60, 61, 62, 69, 71–75, 81
- León silver casket. *See* Sadaqa ibn Yusuf
- leopards, 177, 180
- Lepage, Claude, 173
- Liber sacerdotum*, 57
- libraries, 4, 122, 138, 140, 142, 143
- Lilith, 157
- Limoges, 82, 84
- Linear Kufic, 139–140. *See also* alphabets
- lions, 92, 105, 125, 135, 145, 149, 160, 179, 223, 241n10; on composite objects, 87, 91–92, 99, 105, 109; in Ethiopian iconography, 147–154, 157, 160–162, 165–171; images for magical protection against, 105, 113, 115, 116, 125–138, 145, 160–162; Indian images of, 177, 179; related to therapeutic practices, 125–127, 132–136, 223; small flasks in the form of a lion, 89, 91, 92; as talismans, 223
- long twelfth century, 17, 183
- Loos, Adolf, 231
- Lothar II (Carolingian king), 95
- Lüneburg, 95
- luster ceramics, 5, 163, 163, 197, 205, 205
- ## M
- Madras. *See* Chennai
- Madrid, 45, 50, 53, 60, 63, 69, 73, 81
- Magdelene, Mary, 101, 107
- magic: animals linked to, 105, 113, 115, 116, 125–138; formula and repetition in, 123–124, 129–130; medicine in relation to, 18, 113, 136, 219. *See also* alphabets; amulets; protection; talismans
- magic-medicinal bowls. *See* Islamic magic-medicinal bowls
- magic mirrors, 133, 145
- magic squares, 118, 122, 123, 127, 134, 138, 139, 218, 219
- Malabar, 101, 180. *See also* Kerala; Quilon
- Mamluk Egypt, 118, 123, 124
- al-Ma'mun, Abbasid caliph, 141
- Mandaic, 115, 243n18
- Mandeville, Jean de, 218
- Mangalore, 189, 203
- al-Mansur, Abbasid caliph, 123, 124, 143
- Mappae clavicula*, 57
- maps, 22, 52, 86, 112, 146, 190
- maqāma* genre, 191, 194, 215. *See also* al-Hamadani, Badi' al-Zaman; al-Wasiti, Yahya
- Mardin, 128
- Margariti, Roxani, 197
- Mar Giorgis, Church of Sitt Barbara, Fustat, 164, 165
- Marignolli, Giovanni de', 101, 103–104, 235n49
- maritime voyages: crews and passengers on, 196–197, 199, 201–203, 210; images of, 188, 189, 191; magical protection for, 3, 12, 18, 189, 217–219; oral accounts of, 194, 204–206, 210; wonders in

accounts of, 205–206, 209, 210, 212–213. *See also* circulation and reception of objects
Marshak, Boris, 82
Martin, Jacques, 113, 118
Martin, Therese, 240n42
Mary (mother of Jesus), 6, 13, 15, 27, 50–51, 75, 77, 91, 130, 147, 189
Massawa, 186
al-Mas'udi, *Murūj al-dhahab* (Meadows of gold), 206
Maurus, Hrabanus, 108
Mayyafariqin, 125
Mecca, 18, 69, 105, 117, 117–118, 135, 202, 207, 220, 244n43
Medhane Alem. *See* Savior of the World (Medhane Alem) church
medicine and healing: animals linked to, 131; coconuts associated with, 99, 104; incense associated with, 41–44, 50–51, 136; Islamic metal bowls linked to, 113–145; Islamic practices of, 128; Jesus's acts of, 43; magic in relation to, 18, 113, 136, 219; microcosm-macrocosm relationship in, 45–46; pilgrimage objects associated with, 44, 49–50; Qur'anic verses linked to, 117, 127–129, 131, 133, 138, 139; relics associated with, 43–45, 109; Sisinnios and, 159–160. *See also* protection
Mediterranean, 1, 3, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 33, 53, 87, 98, 113, 15, 117, 122, 124, 132, 139, 143, 147, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 166, 180, 183, 184, 212, 219, 220, 227
meerscham, 218–219
Meinwerk, bishop of Paderborn, portable altar, 80, 81, 81 (detail)
Menas, Saint, cult of, 32
Mercier, Jacques, 173
micro-history, 2, 6, 16, 231, 233
mina'i (enameled ware) ceramics, 169, 197, 199, 214, 215
mirror: depicting a pair of addorsed scorpion-tailed sphinxes, 215, 215; showing a royal falconer trampling a knotted dragon, 164, 164
mirroring, 130
Mokha, 209
Mongols, 16–17, 19, 101, 183, 225, 229, 236n85
monkeys, 191, 196, 206, 212, 214
Monophysitism, 180
Moore, Liam, 73
mosaics, 45, 46, 47, 48
Moshchevaya Balka, Caucasus, 9
Mosul, 145, 193
Mu'awiya, Umayyad caliph, 243n15
al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, Mamluk sultan, 124
Muhammad (Prophet), 131, 133, 138
Mu'izz li-Din Allah, Fatimid caliph, 246n146
Mukherji, Parul Dave, 230–231
Mumbai, 205
Munich, 39
Münster, 77, 79, 87, 91–92, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103–104, 106–109
Münster goblet. *See* coconut reliquaries
muqarnas, 183, 211, 212, 213, 220, 224
al-Mustansir billah, Fatimid caliph, 60
al-Mu'tamid, Abbasid caliph, 130
Muzhi, Siberia, 82

N

Nachleben (living on), 232–233
Nagareśvara temple, Halebid, Karnataka, India, 176, 176
Naples, 101
Narga Selassé church, Lake Tana, Ethiopia, 182, 182
al-Nasir, Abbasid caliph, 138
Negus of Ethiopia, 202. *See also* Axum
networks, 9, 229–233

niello, 5, 10; Andalusian-origin objects featuring, 53, 58, 60, 66, 73, 82–83, 85; Christian significance of trimetallic, 54–55, 77, 81, 82; composition of, 53, 55–57, 73; conceptions of, 55; dating of, 57; imitations of, 73–77; leaded, 18, 53, 56–58, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 81, 83; manuals about, 54, 56–57, 60; origins of, 56–57, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 81–83, 85; technical analysis of, 57–58, 60, 77; techniques of, 56, 58, 81, 83; transmission of techniques for, 8, 18, 53, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 81–83, 85
Nihavand, 57, 69
Nile, Nilotic scenes, 47–48, 48, 49
nimbus, 207
Noah, 127, 202, 217
Normans, 183, 240n30
Nubia, 41, 42, 47, 159, 160, 162, 165, 230. *See also* Dongola
Nur al-Din ibn Zangi, 115, 128, 224, 226
nutmeg and coconut, from the *Tractatus de herbis*, 92, 93
Nye, Joseph, 16

O

objects: archival value of, 4; “biographies” of, 9; concept of, 3; meanings (actual and potential) of, 4–5, 7–8; repurposing of, 10; scholarly approaches to, 9; as source of transmission of techniques, 5, 53; temporalities of, 232; written documents in relation to, 1, 4, 57, 60, 71, 82, 85. *See also* circulation and reception of objects
O’Kane, Bernard, 207
Okeanos, 48
Oman, 44, 192, 194, 201, 203
On the Noble and Illustrious Art of the Goldsmith, 56
Origen of Alexandria, 103
ostensories: 87, 89, 91; in the shape of a fish, 89, 90; with rock crystal cylinder, 89, 90 with so-called Hedwig-beaker, 89, 90. *See also* reliquaries
ostrich egg, 105
Otto III (Holy Roman emperor), 95
Ousanas, ruler of Axum, 151, 153, 153
Ovid, 98

P

Pabst, Bernhard, 103
Paderborn, 81, 241n61
Palermo, Capella Palatina, 183, 197, 212, 213
Palestine, 18, 28, 32, 33, 45, 132, 158, 191
Paradise, 101, 103–105, 107–109
parrots, 214
Paul, Saint, 108
Paul of Thebes, 162
Pelagius, Saint, 73
Pelka, Otto, 237n6
Pentcheva, Bissera, 42
periodization, 16, 17, 231–232. *See also* chronology and dating
Philippines, 92
Phillipps-Corning manuscript, 57
Physiologus, 105–106
Picatrix. *See* *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*
Piguet-Panayotova, Dora, 42
pilgrimage objects, 28, 32, 36, 42, 44, 49. *See also* eulogia tokens
Pisa Griffin, 66, 67
Planets. *See* astrological imagery; zodiacal signs
Platearius, Mattheus: *Circa instans* (*The Book of Simple Medicines*), 92; *Compendium salernitanum*, 92, 94
Pliny, 55

poison: coconut as antidote to, 99, 103–104; dragons linked to, 105–106; and theriacs 131, 133, 136, 145. *See also* Islamic magic-medical bowls

polos, 220, 221

Pomerania, 79

Pompeii, Italy, 9

Poreč, 45

Porter, Roy, 1

prime objects, 8–9, 123–124

Prophetic medicine 131, 133, 139, 140, 243n21

protection, 2; in childbirth, 122, 127, 133, 145, 194, 215, 217–219; coconut used for, 99, 103–104; magic-medical bowls used for, 18, 113, 115, 125–135; on maritime voyages, 3, 12, 18, 189, 217–219; against snakes, scorpions, and dogs, 115, 116, 118, 125–138, 221, 223; temporalities of, 138. *See also* amulets; medicine and healing; talismans

proxies. *See* surrogacy

pyxides, 36, 38, 58, 59, 71

Q

Qal'at Sem'an, 43, 43

Qalawun, Mamluk sultan, 244n68

Qara Arslan ibn Dawud, Fakhr al-Din, 126

Qasr Ibrim, 159

Qipchaqs, 10

Qorqor Maryam, Tigray, 169–170, 170, 189

Quilon (Kollam), 101, 210

Qur'an, 117, 127–129, 131, 133, 138–140, 145, 191, 209, 243n55, 246n9

Quseir al-Qadim, 3, 8, 186, 217

R

Rabbula Gospels, 28, 29, 49

rabies, 115, 118, 128, 130–132, 137

Raby, Julian, 235n35

al-Ramhurmuzi, Buzurg ibn Shahriyar, *Kitāb 'Ajā'ib al-Hind* (Book of the wonders of India), 205–207

Ramisht of Siraf, 220

Raqqā, 167

Rassamakin, Yuriy, 10

Rasulid sultans, 115, 184, 187, 249n147

Raymond of Burgundy, 73

Redford, Scott, 99

Red Sea, 2, 3, 7, 8, 154, 184, 186, 189, 203, 205, 212, 217, 219, 247n50

Regensburg, 95

Reil, Johannes, 237n6

relics: Christ's blood, 87, 92, 99, 101, 104, 109; containers for, 44, 73, 75, 87, 89, 91, 100–101, 103, 104, 106, 107; healing power associated with, 43–45, 109; housed in church treasuries, 89; Saint Heribert's chalice, 95; Saint Pelagius, 72, 73; Saint Thomas the Apostle, 180; secondary, 45, 49; True Cross fragments, 44, 92, 101

reliquaries, 73, 75, 89, 91, 92, 99–101; reliquary-ciborium with the chalice of Saint Heribert, 95, 96, 109; reliquary crucifix, 60, 61, 62, 75, 75; reliquary of the miraculous blood, 89, 90; reliquary with flask in the shape of two birds, 98, 99; reliquary with heart-shaped lid, 71, 71. *See also* ostensories

Rhineland, 10, 11, 82

rhinoceros, 153, 173

Richter, Jörg, 108

Richter-Siebels, Ilse, 34, 236n3

Roberts, Jennifer L., 231, 232

Robinson, Cynthia, 60, 66

rock crystal: 7, 18, 71, 77, 78, 79, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 99, 101, 104, 108–109, 230; bottle in the shape of a lion, 89, 91, 92; in composite objects, 18, 87–109; meanings and associations of, 101, 108; origin of work in, 71; sculpting of, 95

Roger, Eugène, 113

Roger of Helmarshausen, 77, 81, 241n61

Rosser-Owen, Mariam, 71

Rückenfiguren (figures seen from behind), 33–34

Rufus of Ephesus, 130

S

Sadaqa ibn Yusuf, casket of, 53, 54, 54 (detail), 56, 58, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 77, 81

saffron, medicinal and occult uses of, 115, 118, 128, 133, 218, 243n5, 251n125

Saint Anthony's Monastery, Egypt, 153, 154, 157, 162, 247n50

Saint Mary church, Asmara, Eritrea, wood panels, 153, 155, 182

Saint Petersburg, 69, 71, 77, 81, 203, 204

Salzburg, 95

al-Samarqandi, 'Abd al-Razzaq, 187

Samarra, Iraq, 212, 213

Sancha of León-Castilla, 73–75

sandalwood, 92, 210

Sanjan, 205

Sanskrit, 12, 211, 241n16

Sapinud, 197

Sasanian art, 153

Savior of the World (Medhane Alem) church, Lalibela, Ethiopia, 173, 174, 180, 180, 186–187

Schloss Ehrenburg, 95

scorpions, 115, 116, 118, 125, 127–138, 221, 223

scrolls. *See* healing scrolls

seals, sealing, 118, 127, 128, 132, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 144, 145, 245n116

sea voyages. *See* maritime voyages

Seljuqs, 12, 140, 147, 151, 223

sensory experiences, 47, 50. *See also* smell

Serçe Limanı shipwreck, 12–13

Serpent Gate, Aleppo, 125, 125, 138, 157

serpents. *See* dragons; snakes

Shadbakht, 202

Shāhnāma (Book of Kings), 140, 197

Shalem, Avinoam, 71

Shanga, 187

shields, 173, 174, 176–177, 179–181, 180, 181, 187

Shiva, 210

Siberia, 10, 11, 82, 85

Sicily, 42, 98, 183

Silk Road, 2, 235n11

Simon of Genoa, 87

Siraf, 206, 220

al-Sirafi, Abu Zayd, *Akhbār al-Šīn wa'l-Hind* (Reports of China and India), 205–207

Sisinnios, Saint, 157–162, 247n50. *See also* Susenyos

slavery/slaves, 9, 202–203, 207, 208, 209–210, 250n25; 251n88

smell, 42–44. *See also* aromatics

Smith, Pamela H., 229

snakes, 115, 118, 125, 127–138, 221

Sofala, 207

Sohar, 192, 194, 196, 201, 203, 210

Solomon, 141, 157–159, 161, 224, 243n17, 247n44

Somalia, 41

Soucek, Priscilla, 240n37

sphinxes, 151, 165–171, 191, 196, 212–215, 220, 221, 224, 227, 230
spirals: circulation and reception of, 82; comparisons of, 69; meanings of, 55, 79–85; as ornament, 58, 60, 66, 69, 75, 77, 81–83, 85; structural purpose of, 77, 79; techniques for creating, 56, 58, 77
Sri Lanka, 101, 103, 109
Steedman, Carolyn, 16
stones. *See* bezoar; gems; lapis lazuli; rock crystal
St. Petersburg, 56, 69, 71, 73, 74, 77, 81, 189, 203–204, 237n9
Strassburg, Ulrich von, 103
Strathern, Alan, 16
Suger, Abbot, 98
Sulayman the Merchant, *Akhbār al-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind* (Reports of China and India), 205–207
surrogacy, 50, 129–130
Susenyos, Saint, spearing a demon, 159–160, 160
Swahili Coast, 187, 189
sword hilt featuring a *hamsa* (auspicious swan) motif, 12–13, 14
Symeon the Elder, Saint, 42, 238n59; pilgrim token of, 43, 44; relief with depiction of, 43
sympathetic relationships, 131, 135, 136, 138
Syria: 5, 6, 31, 33, 35, 42, 44, 45, 115, 118, 123, 124, 125, 126, 132, 135, 140, 143, 147, 157, 164, 167, 169, 184, 186, 191, 193, 194, 197, 220, 221, 223, 224; censers, 28, 31, 35, 42, 44; illustrated books from, 193–194, 197; magic-medicinal bowls, 115, 118, 123–125, 140, 143, 157. *See also* Aleppo; Damascus; Hims; Qal'at Sem'an
Syriac, 28, 31, 105, 115, 124, 237n9
Syriac Christians, 180

T

Taifa kingdoms, 53, 66, 73
Talisman Gate, Baghdad, 138, 139, 160
talismans, 18, 113, 115, 118, 122, 123, 125–126, 127, 131, 133–135, 137, 139, 141, 169, 215, 217–221, 223–224
Tebtonis, 159
technique and technical knowledge: channels for transfers of, 53, 71, 73; for niello, 8, 18, 53–85; transmission of, 4–5, 53, 60, 66, 69, 71, 73, 81–83, 85
temporalities: of censers, 47–51; Christian, 48–49, 51; complexity of, 232; of composite objects, 224, 227; of cultures, 17–18; iconographic revivals, 220–224; of Islamic magic-medicinal bowls, 117, 138–140; network conception of, 231–232; of objects, 8–9, 232; of al-Wasiti's *Maqāmāt* images, 219–224. *See also* chronology and dating; periodization
Teruel, 51, 52, 60, 66, 69, 81,
Testament of Solomon, 157, 159
textiles, 5, 6, 7, 48, 49, 106, 166, 179, 184, 186, 196, 220, 240n37
Thailand, 205
Theodore Stratelates, Saint, 153, 154
Theodoros, 45
Theodulph of Orleans, 44
Theophanes, 42
Theophilus Presbyter, *De diversis artibus*, 57, 77
theriacs, 131, 133, 136, 145. *See also* poison
thing, concept of, 1, 3–4, 8–9, 15, 79, 231
Thomas the Apostle, Saint, 101, 107, 180, 248n105
Thousand and One Nights, 206
Tiberius, Mauricius, 39
al-Tifashi, Ahmad ibn Yusuf, 218
Tigray: Abraha and Atsbeha church, Wuqro, 185, 185, 186; Bilet, 186; Debra Damo, 5–6; Debra Selam Mikael, 248n105, 248n106; Kwiha, 186; Qorqor Maryam, 169 170, 170, 189
Tigris, 124, 127, 206

Toledo, 66, 69
transmediality, 4, 181, 194
treasuries, 6, 29, 51, 70, 71, 73, 83, 87, 89, 91, 92, 95, 96, 98–101, 104–105, 107–108, 122, 124, 140, 142, 143, 182, 184, 186–187, 232, 235n36, 238n32, 239n5, 240n40, 240n42, 242n20
Trier Ivory, 44, 45
Trinity, 55, 75, 77, 79, 81–83, 85, 92
Trouillot, Michel-Rolph, 17, 230
True Cross relics, 44, 92, 101
Trzemeszno, chalice and paten from, 77, 78, 78 (detail), 79

U

al-Uballa, 203–205, 207
Ukraine, covered cup found at Chungul Kurgan, 10, 11, 82
Umayyad caliphate, 33, 53, 124, 243n15, 246n139
UNESCO World Heritage sites, 147
Urraca, queen of León-Castilla, 73
'Uthman, artisan 60, 75

V

Vatican pilgrim casket, 28, 29, 49
Venice, 95
Vermand Treasure, 77
Vienna, 77, 79
Vikan, Gary, 237n6
Vikings, 9–10, 235n48
Vishnu, 210

W

al-Walid I, Umayyad caliph, 246n139
Walker, Alicia, 13
Wallerstein, Immanuel, 16
Walsperger map, 10
Warburg, Aby, 232–233
Wasit, 206
al-Wasiti, Yahya, *Maqāmāt*, 193–194, 199, 202–204, 206–207, 209–215, 219–220, 224; image of a ship sailing to Sohar, Oman, 191, 192, 193, 195–196, 196 (detail), 199, 206, 210; scene of an enchanted island, 191, 193, 193, 196, 204, 206, 210, 213–214, 214 (detail), 220; scene of arrival at the palace, 191, 193, 193, 196, 210, 210–213, 211 (detail), 212 (detail); scene of a slave market in Zabid, 207, 208, 209 (detail), 210; scene of birth within the palace, 195, 195, 196, 201, 207, 210, 215, 217 (details), 218–219
wax, 34–35
Wärzelyā, 159, 171, 247n50
west Asia, 15, 16, 17, 23, 32, 50, 98, 133, 115, 117, 166, 171, 218, 220, 227
Wilten chalice and paten, 60, 63, 64, 76 (details), 77, 79, 81
world systems theory, 16

Y

Yemen, 2, 3, 44, 56, 115, 184–187, 197, 203, 207, 209, 221, 249n147.
See also Mokha; Zabid
Yemrehanna Krestos church, near Lalibela, Ethiopia, 153, 155, 170–171, 171, 173, 177, 177, 178, 179–180, 183, 188, 189, 191
Yonan, Michael, 1

Z

Zabid, 207, 208, 210

Zacharias, Saint, 45, 47, 238n45
Zagwe dynasty, 147, 149, 153, 156, 158–159, 166, 179, 183,
186–187, 189
al-Zahir Baybars, Mamluk sultan, 122, 246n146
Zahr's scent flask (or Albarracín flask), 60, 65, 66, 69, 81
Zamora Pyxis, 58, 59, 71
Zangid dynasty, 115, 244n51. *See also* Nur al-Din ibn Zangi
Zanj, 207, 210
Zanzibar, 187
Zayla, 186, 212
zebra, 249n147
Zir Ganela Gospels, 170, 171
zodiacal signs, 127, 134, 136–138, 145, 246n157. *See also*
astrological imagery