

Penned by Encounter: Visibility and Invisibility of the Cross-Cultural in Images from Early Modern Franciscan Missions in Central Africa and Central Mexico

CÉCILE FROMONT, *Yale University*

This article considers a corpus of images created between 1650 and 1750 within Italian Capuchin missions to Kongo and Angola. It demonstrates how these visual creations, though European in form, craftsmanship, and intended audience, were in fact penned by encounter and the products of cross-cultural interactions. Contrasting the Central African images with two well-known and oft-studied Franciscan visual projects from early colonial Mexico, the article further reflects on the stakes of making visible the mixings present, but often overlooked or silenced, in early modern images born from encounters between Europeans and the people they considered their Others.

INTRODUCTION

AN AFRICAN MAN and a European friar stroll together in an eerily peaceful landscape, engaged in conversation (fig. 1). They turn to each other, exchanging thoughts about the awe-inspiring cliff they are approaching, the great Angolan

My thanks to Kim Coles and Jessica Wolfe for their invitation to participate in this issue and for their editorial guidance. I am very grateful for the anonymous reviewer's insightful comments, for Sophia Kitlinski's assistance with research and image permissions, and for the support of Yale's History of Art Department, Yale's Institute for Sacred Music, the Center for the Advanced Study of Visual Arts, the Renaissance Society of America's Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship, the Michigan Society of Fellows, and the American Academy in Rome.

Renaissance Quarterly 75 (2022): 1221–65 © The Author(s), 2022. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Renaissance Society of America. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is unaltered and is properly cited. The written permission of Cambridge University Press must be obtained for commercial re-use or in order to create a derivative work.

doi: 10.1017/rqx.2022.331



Figure 1. Paolo da Lorena (attr.). *Pungu a Ndongo or Fortress of the Pedras Negras*, from Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi and Fortunato Alamandini, *Istorica descrizione de' tre' regni Congo, Matamba, et Angola* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1687), 799. Etching, 173 x 469 mm. Photograph courtesy of the National Library of Portugal.

geological landmark of Pungu a Ndongo, a site that still inspires today the making of dramatic images (fig. 2).¹ No suggestions of power dynamics, let alone conflict, transpire from the carefully calibrated pair in the etching. The two men are similar in height, stand with equal confidence, and speak with uniform conviction. Needless to say, this is an unusual representation of a pairing between an African and a European man in an image created in seventeenth-century Italy. Indeed, in the early modern period, the inhabitants of the African continent, with the rare exceptions of real or imagined elite characters, sooner appeared under the brush, burin, or etching needle of European image makers as savages, as subservient figures included merely as decorative motifs, or else as anonymous, exotic characters rather than the fully realized protagonist seen here.² Yet this vignette is typical, perhaps even emblematic, of the images that emerged as part of the Capuchin apostolate in Kongo and Angola where

¹ These toponyms are different abbreviations of the phrase *matadi ma upungu a ndongo*, literally “tall rocks of Ndongo”; it appears in the historical documents and literature as Maopungo, Pedras de Maopungo, Matadi Maopungo, and Pungo Andongo. The site acquired the epithet of Ndongo in 1626, when Ngola-a-Ari, resident ruler of Maopungo, became the Portuguese-supported king of Ndongo as Felipe I instead of Queen Njinga. It was conquered and incorporated into Portuguese Angola in 1671. Cavazzi visited the site periodically from 1655 to 1664. See Heintze, 1985, 96, 101, 202. About the Jesuits, see Brásio, 1952, vii, 419. About the name, see Cadornega and Delgado, vol. 1, notes on pages 167–68. See also Heintze, 1977, 768–69; Cavazzi, 2:220n71.

² See Bindman, Gates, and Dalton, 2010; Bindman, Gates, and Dalton, 2011a; Bindman, Gates, and Dalton, 2011b; Spicer. The depiction of ambassadors from the Kongo in the seventeenth century is a notable, and related, exception: see Fromont, 2014, 109–72.



Figure 2. Nuno Miguel Ferreira de Almeida. *Panoramic View at the Mountains Pungo Andongo, Pedras Negras*, 2018. Digital photograph. © Nuno Miguel Ferreira de Almeida.

the members of the order officiated as priests and missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Between 1650 and 1750, as part of their activities in west Central Africa, Franciscan friars of the Capuchin order composed dozens of images and wrote hundreds of pages in the form of practical guides to the Kongo and Angola missions for the edification of novice missionaries still in Italy. These guides presented the intricacies of the natural, social, and religious landscape that veteran friars had encountered in a region they reached at the demand of the rulers of the Christian Kongo.³ The kings and elites of the African realm had embraced Christianity and made it the official religion in their lands since the last decade of the fifteenth century. The friars also chronicled in their images their experiences in the neighboring polities of Matamba—the land of the fierce and apostate warrior Queen Njinga—as well as in the emergent Portuguese colony of Angola (fig. 3).

The Capuchin practical guides offered full-page views of everyday scenes, drawings of flora or fauna specimens, or episodes of missionary life, all footed with words of advice and admonition with the explicit aims to correct the misconceptions that Italian friars unfamiliar with Central Africa harbored and to describe to them the techniques and conduct suitable for this singular missionary field. The Capuchin Central African didactic manuscripts thus formed rich but eminently idiosyncratic compendia that only circulated in Minorite circles, despite their authors' hopes for a broader audience.⁴ They were so singular, in fact, that most of the watercolors and ink drawings that formed the corpus have confounded interpretation, remaining unpublished and largely unstudied in their own times as well as the present. The landscape print in figure 1 is among the few exceptions that reached the printing press. It appeared in friar

³ Fromont, 2022a. Part of this essay derives from material in this book.

⁴ Fromont, 2011a.

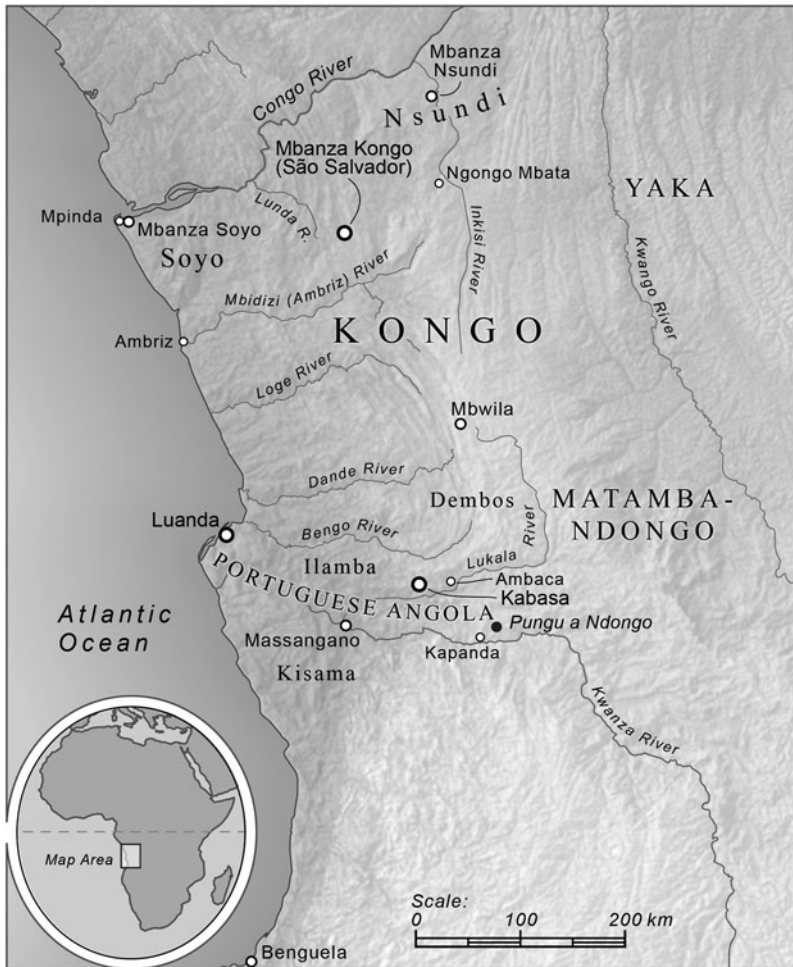


Figure 3. West Central Africa, ca. 1700. Drawn by James DeGrand.

Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi and Fortunato Alamandini's *Istorica descrizione de' tre' regni Congo, Matamba, et Angola* (Historical description of the three kingdoms Congo, Matamba, and Angola, 1687), the most important source to this day on early modern Central Africa.⁵ The book was published after decades of writing and editing, first in the hand of Cavazzi (1621–78), a veteran of the Kongo and Angola mission, and then under the very critical eye of another Capuchin, Fortunato Alamandini (1636–92), who never left Italy. The latter, following directives from his order and Rome, not only modified the text of the

⁵ Cavazzi and Alamandini.

book but also reworked of his own accord the illustration program Cavazzi had conceived and commissioned, which he considered improper at best. He was eventually unable to secure funding for an entire new set of prints and could only make eight new etchings, which he prominently showcased in the early pages of the volume. In the rest of the book, he sorted, reordered, and likely reduced the number of the existing plates, including the landscape in figure 1.⁶ The large fold-out, like the majority of Cavazzi's compositions, came from watercolors that participated in the Capuchin Central African didactic corpus, and it is as part of this larger body of images that I consider the etching in this essay.

The visual project the friars devised and implemented in and about Central Africa forms a unique and important corpus that greatly enriches knowledge of the region and broadens understanding of early modern Catholic missions. But it also has a profound impact on the study of the early modern world at the level of methods, because the vignettes disrupt prevailing interpretative trends for the analysis of images created in cross-cultural environments. The Capuchin Central African images emerged from a social and political context in which friars acted at the demand and under the control of local populations, and did not reflect colonial ambitions. Their carefully calibrated depictions of an even relationship between friars and Central Africans did not rehash European fantasies about a savage or exotic Other. Rather, they grew at the nexus of fraught but deep and lasting encounters and exchanges between clerics and Central Africans, during which both sides saw their knowledge and perspectives transformed. The analytical language of exoticism and postcolonial critique are thus inadequate to make sense of them. Instead, in this essay, I suggest that the Capuchin visual corpus leads to a new approach to early modern images wrought in cross-cultural contexts, an approach centered on the role of poesis as a source and agent of their conception and functioning mode.

With the landscape print as its main example, this article argues that the visual output of the Capuchin mission in Central Africa, though created by European hands, for European viewers, and mobilizing exclusively European iconography and genres, was in fact penned by encounter and should be approached as a cross-cultural production whose authorship lies in its poesis, or circumstances of its creation. Further, it brings the Central African images in dialogue with two well-known and oft-studied Franciscan visual projects from early colonial Mexico, whose cross-cultural dimensions differed from those of the Capuchin corpus in nature, form, and visibility. Considering the three very distinct projects together sheds light on the different ways in which early modern visual productions born from encounters between Europeans and

⁶ Fromont, 2022a, 13–62; Faria.

the people they considered their Others emerged and functioned cross-culturally. Considering the scholarly interpretations brought to bear on their cross-cultural dimension, in turn, underlines the epistemic and political conditions under which viewers and interpreters have recognized them, or not, as culturally mixed and foregrounds the consequences that such visibility or invisibility has had on their art historical study. Finally, the essay reflects on the stakes of making visible, through its proposed method, the mixings present, but often overlooked or silenced, in early modern European images addressing non-European locales and peoples.

RECEPTION AND INCEPTION

Let's turn to the landscape print. A quintessentially Franciscan image, it possessed a theologically driven and iconographically implemented permeability to the world of its viewers. It features a friar, dressed in his habit inspired by the tattered clothing of the order's founding saint, and standing with his arms open in the attitude of awe iconic of images of stigmatization. In this Central African picture, the motif puts to work a well-honed Franciscan visual trope. Through devout contemplation and action, viewers are meant to project themselves in the barefoot tracks of Saint Francis or one of his followers to emulate their imitation of Christ, an exercise that culminated for the saint in achieving conformity with God and its visible mark, stigmata. A dark spot in the palm of the etched missionary in the landscape print, recalling the holy marks, makes clear that the image invites a Franciscan mode of viewing, ripe with its spiritual reward of achieving conformity with Christ. The bare cliff of Pungu a Ndongo also played its part in the Franciscan tableau by echoing the Monte Penna and La Verna, the site of Saint Francis's spiritual retreat and the theater of his stigmatization.⁷ The spectacular mountain etched by Raffaello Schiaminossi (1572–1622), after a Jacopo Ligozzi (1547–1627) design in the renowned *Descrizione del Sacro Monte* (1612), illustrates the suggestive parallels viewers could make between the Central African and Italian cliffs, both of which commanded a fold-out format in print (fig. 4).

Readers of the *Istorica Descrizione* would first encounter the illustration of Pungu a Ndongo as a folded sheet that, depending on the binding and folding of each copy of the book, was blank or revealed the etched lines of a few shrubs or fronds between pleats (fig. 5). The cliff and the full scene would only reveal themselves as the viewer unfolded the page. This process of discovery followed the experience of the pictured protagonists. They would have set eyes on the mountain range only after leaving behind the forest that frames the print on

⁷ "Sacred Mountain of La Verna," <https://www.nga.gov/features/description-sacred-mountain-la-verna.html>.



Figure 4. Jacopo Ligozzi (designer) and Raffaello Schiaminossi (etcher). *Plate A: View of the Mountain of La Verna from the Road of Casentino*, from fra Lino Moroni, *Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia* (Florence, 1612). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Acquisition funded by a grant from the B. H. Breslauer Foundation, 2013.67.9.2.



Figure 5. Two-page spread from Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi and Fortunato Alamandini, *Istorica descrizione de' tre regni Congo, Matamba, et Angola* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1687), 798–99. 292 x 199 mm (folio). Photograph by the author.

either side. The space of the image and the space of the viewer become enmeshed once more as somatic experiences of discovery and awe are projected from the printed page to the real world.

The permeability between the space of the image and that of the viewer also inhered in the landscape genre. In seventeenth-century Italy, connoisseurs and collectors of paintings saw landscapes and natural history images as instruments for virtual experiences. Physician and art critic Giulio Mancini (1558–1630) described how the healthful effects of a walk in nature could be achieved at home through the contemplation of a painted landscape.⁸ Cardinal Federico Borromeo (1564–1631) lyrically reflected on the soothing effects of traveling through land- and seascape and marveling at God's creations, a journey on which he embarked by beholding images while "standing in our room."⁹ In other words, narrative and formal elements in the landscape print created a vista that invited their intended viewers to consider the pictured and real worlds as concurrent and connected, and to immerse themselves in the depicted space.

Taking my cue from this fluid conception of the intimate, porous relationship between form, content, and visualization in the reception of pictures, I explore the ways in which the circumstances of the landscape print's creation, that is to say its poesis or inception, played a role in its making. The motif of the two men is a key in this approach (fig. 6). It represents and identifies the sources and origins of the visual discourse that the print expresses and contributes to shape. The friar and the African man walk alongside each other, discuss, and, I argue here, reckon together about the nature and significance of the landscape around them, real and etched. Echoing the iconography of small draftsman figures indicating that a landscape was drawn from life, the pair marks the print as originating from their lived experience and as the product of their conversations.

The motif of the two men makes the print a self-aware image that points to its origins in the encounter (even if fraught) and in the conversation (even if messy) between friars and Central African people. The etching not only records the unfolding of cross-cultural dialogue and negotiations but also gives visual form to what these interactions are in the process of producing: a specific view of and visual discourse about early modern Central Africa. As such, the image points to its character as not just a picture of Central Africa and its inhabitants conceived and executed by Europeans, but also a picture from Central Africa and molded by Central Africans in dialogue with Europeans. It reveals how African and European subjectivities shaped each

⁸ Gage, 2008 and 2016.

⁹ Borromeo, *Pro suis studiis*, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, MS G310inf, no. 8, 1628, fols. 252^r–253^r, cited in P. M. Jones, 268.



Figure 6. Detail from Paolo da Lorena (attr.). *Pungu a Ndongo or Fortress of the Pedras Negras*, from Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi and Fortunato Alamandini, *Istorica descrizione de' tre' regni Congo, Matamba, et Angola* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1687), 799. Etching, 173 x 469 mm. Photograph by the author.

other and the image in a process of cross-cultural discourse making that was honed in a sociopolitical context that was neither colonial nor devoid of prejudice and conflict.

It is crucial to underline that the political and social environment of the Capuchins' apostolic endeavors in Kongo and Angola was exceptional within the early modern Catholic missionary world. Far from the religious arm of a colonial occupation, as Catholic missions were in the Americas, the friars acted in most of Central Africa at the behest and under the control of local powers. The immersive Capuchin images of Kongo and Angola thus invited viewers to plunge into a pictured space that both illustrated and reflected a social, natural, and political landscape wrought on the anvil of cross-cultural dialogue, exchange, and negotiation, and in which Europeans did not have the upper hand.¹⁰

EUROPE'S GREAT DISCOVERY

Returning to the landscape print, let's consider the dark-skinned man clad in a short loincloth. One step in front of the friar, he stands in a classical pose. He is an Apollo Belvedere seen from the back outfitted with the Roman statue's sweeping

¹⁰ About early modern Kongo, see, among others, Fromont, 2014; Thornton, 1983.

drapes, muscular body, and dramatic head and arm gestures, made famous by Bolognese engraver Marcantonio Raimondi (1480–1534).¹¹ Readers of Cavazzi may also have recognized the classical silhouette and emblematic bow and arrows from their appearances in travel literature, where they served as templates for the European motif of the naked savage (fig. 7). Here, however, the arrow in the hand of the African man, who turns his head back to speak with the friar standing behind him, acts as neither projectile nor emblem of savagery. Rather, the dart elongates his index finger into a schoolmaster's stick, which the Capuchin's gaze intently follows. A bold, dark diagonal intersecting the thinly etched lines of the rolling hills, the dart is conspicuous in the print. It directs a certain reading of the image, a reading in which arrow and dark-skinned man both play a central role.

The maker of the print portrayed the African man holding his dart as a didactic stick, stepping forward assuredly and looking back to talk with the friar, as an active participant in the scene. While his presence in the image alongside the cleric is to some extent an index, a trace of Capuchin apostolic activities in Central Africa, his elongated pointed finger determines the image's deictic center. Such a position is of great significance because it shows a non-European figure as a subject rather than an object in the print. Pointing and speaking, the African man is able to determine his own here and now, to confidently assert his subjecthood and intellectual authority within the world that he inhabits alongside the European figure. This depiction is particularly meaningful because the absence of subjectivity is precisely one of the recurrent distinguishing features differentiating the savage from the civilized in early modern European discourses of Otherness.¹²

To a large extent, the idea of the newly encountered savage's lack of perspective—in both the visual and intellectual sense of the term—was the actual “Great Discovery” Europeans made in what they would later term the age of exploration and overseas expansion. This mental construction emerged in Europe and found narrative form in travel literature, where it appeared in the guise of empirical observation or, in other words,

¹¹ See Marcantonio Raimondi, “The Apollo Belvedere from the Vatican has his left hand resting on the tree trunk around which coils a python,” 1510–27, engraving, 29.1 x 16.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 49.97.114.

¹² This is a very different type of image than the allochronic strategy of representation of the Other in many images: see Fabian. See also Schmidt, 105. Schmidt sees the allochronic dimension of seventeenth-century Dutch prints as a commercial strategy to allow for reuse, but a consequence of this commercial strategy is the propagation in readers' minds of the idea that the cultures represented dwell outside of time and history. A commercial decision with broad civilizational consequence.

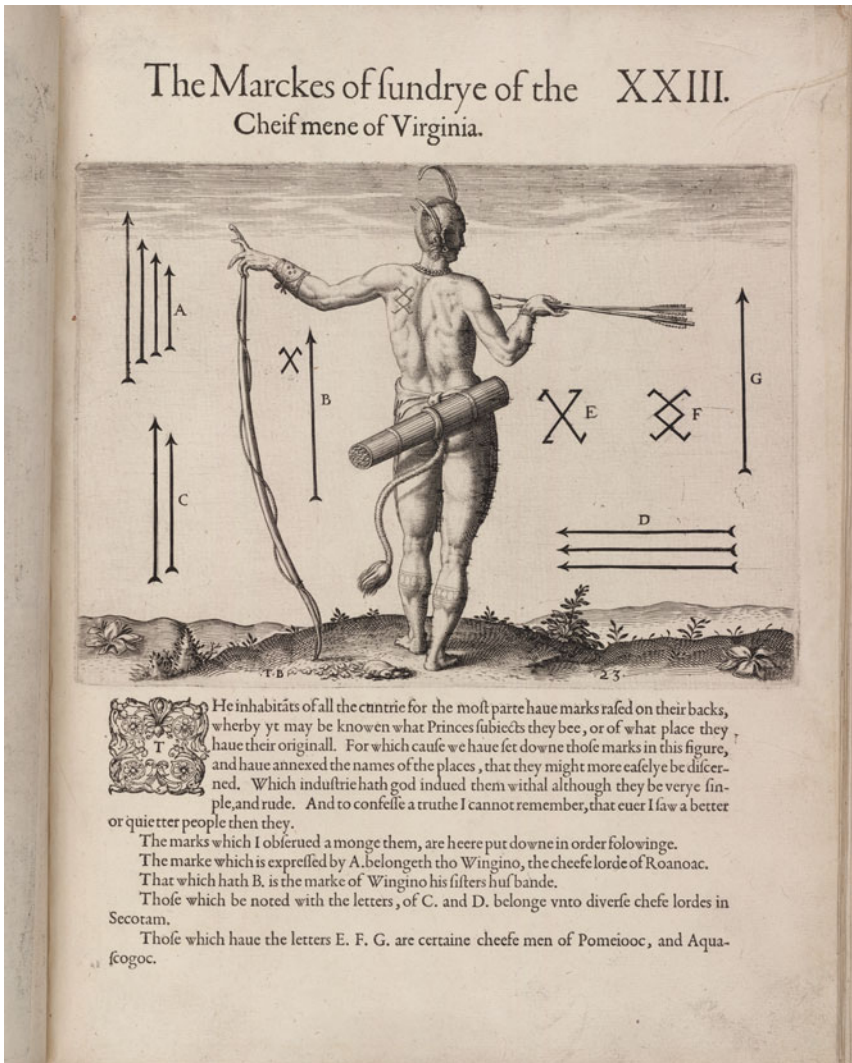


Figure 7. Theodor de Bry. *The Markes of Sundrye of the Chief mene of Virginia*, from Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Francoforti ad Moenvm: typis I. Wecheli, svmtibvs vero T. de Bry, 1590), plate 23. Engraving, 33 x 25 cm. Beinecke Library, New Haven, CT. Photograph courtesy of the Beinecke Library.

discovery. And this discovery would prove foundational for and fundamental to the rise of European modernity. It was precisely in the so-called discovery of the savages' lack of worldview that Europeans acquired perspective, becoming aware of the contingency of their world and worldview as one

out of many.¹³ Concurrently, a supposed absence of perspective became the cornerstone for the definition of Europe's savage Other, and the foundation upon which Europeans constructed early modernity on the basis of their newfound and contradistinctive awareness of their world as mutable, and their individual worldviews as contingent.

Visually, these ideas yielded representations such as Theodor de Bry's (1528–98) sixteenth-century engravings of Indigenous Americans, which used as their sources the watercolors that cartographer John White (d. 1593) made during his 1585–86 visit to the nascent English colony of Virginia in North America (fig. 7).¹⁴ De Bry's depiction of the American man in *The Marckes of sundrye of the Chief mene of Virginia* (1590) is paradigmatic of that moment. Engraved into being by a European artist confidently picturing a corner of the world other than his own—a world, what is more, that he had not seen—the Indigenous man stands, in contrast, with his back turned to European viewers. Even if he holds two arrows, which art historian Michael Gaudio once suggested could be read as akin to the engraver's burin, their tips are awkwardly turned inward toward his own body, firmly placing the would-be Indigenous instruments of inscription back into the hands of the European image maker.¹⁵ Furthering the visual rhetoric, the engraver pictured the Indigenous man staring at an empty horizon, in an almost blank page he occupies alongside abstract signs and alphabetic letters that European readers would know to combine to form explanations for the tattoos on his body. Though to some extent similar to the marks on the Indigenous man's skin, Gaudio has argued, the letters are foremost signs of another kind. They belong to what Europeans considered the chief technology of civilization: alphabetic writing.¹⁶ While the engraver pictures the Other and inscribes him in his own epistemological realm of alphabetic writing and iconographic references, the tattooed Indigenous man merely points to himself in a weak gesture of self-awareness. He stands alone in a world turned onto itself, his body the only canvas and measure of his self-enclosed, perspectiveless horizons. This is the classic image of early modern travel literature,

¹³ Koerner, 299. The early modern explorer is a male figure; discourses of race and gender are intimately entwined: see Hall. About Europeans' construction of Otherness, see also Todorov; Greenblatt.

¹⁴ Hulton.

¹⁵ Gaudio, 2007.

¹⁶ Rama; Rappaport and Cummins.

interpreted as a reflection and instrument of a nascent European ideology about Otherness.

PICTURING DIALOGUE IN KONGO AND ANGOLA

In the landscape print, in contrast, the African man stands firmly on the grounds he is in the process of defining and inscribing, in spoken words within the image as well as ink on the page by wielding his arrow turned etching needle with authorial authority and subjectivity. The view of the great cliff is in part his, that of an African who has entered into dialogue with the European man, and beyond him, with Europe's religious and lay knowledge as well as technologies of inscription and communication. The scene strikingly stages a shared early modernity in which both men are plunged into a common experience of the paradigmatically modern uncertainty derived from the multiplication of worldviews. Immersed together in the landscape and the arduous process of cross-cultural meaning production, the two men confront ideas, exchange points of view, and together partake in the construction of an early modern Central African discourse about nature, culture, and faith. The discourse that is here emerging unfolds in the print and in the Capuchin Central African corpus at large.

Without suggesting a naïve and inaccurate interpretation of the Capuchin corpus and of the missionary activities in which it partook as benign encounters, I want to underline the significance of the images' depictions of dialogue between interlocutors of different cultural backgrounds. It is a motif that urges us to think deeply about the multiple perspectives from which the vignettes gain their contours. The social and religious context of the Capuchin mission yielded carefully calibrated images of cooperation and balanced power between Capuchins and Central Africans. In the vignettes, as in the landscape print, painted friars and rulers appear almost as mirror images of each other, in similar bodily attitudes and on par in height, entourage, and regalia (fig. 8).

Acting at the demand and under the control of the Kongo and Angolan elite, the friars had to work within the fabric of Central African societies. A core visual dimension of this atmosphere is the conspicuous presence in the Capuchin vignettes of *mestres da igreja* (church masters), clad in their easily recognizable white cloth draped over a shoulder, looming over the friars' every move in the course of their apostolic work. *Mestres da igreja* were members of the most elite circles of the Kongo, trained since childhood in Portuguese, Latin, and Catholic doctrine by older *mestres*, who formed the backbone of church organization in the kingdom. Images of dialogue between *mestres* and friars such as the one in figure 9 recur in



Figure 8. Bernardino da Veza d'Asti. *The missionary [. . .] is welcomed by the local ruler*, ca. 1750. Watercolor on paper, 19.5 x 28 cm. From "Missione in pratica: Padri cappucini ne Regni di Congo, Angola, et adiacenti," Biblioteca civica Centrale, Turin, MS 457, fol. 9^v. Photograph courtesy of the Biblioteca civica Centrale, Torino.

the Capuchin Central African corpus, and it is precisely such a scene that features in Cavazzi's great landscape. In the print, the cloth wrapped around the hips of the African man rises awkwardly at the front in a trace of its original form as a representation of the white textile draped over the *mestre's* shoulder, but misinterpreted by the European etcher as a loincloth. Similarly, his staff of office has become a bow, and his pointing finger depicting him in the attitude of speech an arrow in the exoticizing hand of the European artist. The etcher translated the painted or drawn Capuchin image of the *mestre* that formed the basis of the print into a generic figure of the savage Other, nearly naked and armed with a bow and arrow, following what was by the seventeenth century an established European iconography. The idea of Otherness as savagery, or at best imperfect civilization, circulated in Europe in visual form from royal commissions to vernacular material culture and in print, not only for political reasons but also for commercial profit, not least in the hands of enterprising editors.¹⁷

¹⁷ Schmidt; Jarry; Molineux.



Figure 9. Bernardino da Veza d'Asti. *The Missionary, traveling by foot*, ca. 1750. Watercolor on paper, 19.5 x 28 cm. From "Missione in pratica: Padri cappuccini ne Regni di Congo, Angola, et adiacenti," Biblioteca civica Centrale, Turin, MS 457, fol. 6^v. Photograph courtesy of the Biblioteca civica Centrale, Torino.

In order to understand the Cavazzi print, it is essential to look past the etcher's exoticizing translation and recognize the African man as a *mestre*.

Implicit in the print, and all the clearer when reading the man as an elite Central African, is the thick historical and cultural background that made possible the lively conversational encounter pictured between the two men. The simple fact that the two men talk to each other underscores that one or both men have learned the language of the other. That the African is a church master points to his status as the member of a sophisticated Christian society. That he holds the staff and white cloth that emblemize his function as *mestre* shows how he inhabits a world with broad religious, artistic, and commercial horizons. The staff and cloth were two items that local artists and artisans created by recasting once European, and once wholly local, emblems into new objects of Kongo Christian visual culture. The luminous white cloth of the *mestres* mixed and merged local and imported religious symbolism. It drew from the deep-rooted cosmological currency of whiteness in Central Africa, as well as from Portuguese liturgical garb worn by clerics who traveled to Kongo or that featured in the panel paintings imported in the region since the early years of contact

between the two realms.¹⁸ Kongo artists created the *mestres'* staffs of office and other objects such as crucifixes, rosaries, and medals in a similar correlation of local and imported ideas and symbols. The staff in [figure 10](#), for instance, articulates Central African textile-inspired surface decoration with a cross at its top and bulbous knobs inspired from European Baroque turned wood. Its provenance does not allow it to be dated definitively to the early modern era, but it belongs to a category of objects whose form emerged in the period.¹⁹

It is important to bear in mind that the intense and lasting dialogue between Central Africans and Capuchins formed only one part of the much broader engagement that the region's people maintained with Europe and its visual, material, and religious cultures. The Kongo had declared itself Christian and participated in Atlantic networks of trade and diplomacy since the end of the fifteenth century, more than a century and a half before the arrival of the friars. Its visual culture, Christian and otherwise, thus developed in interaction with Europe through objects and artworks imported in the region by clerics as well as traders throughout the decades.²⁰ The region's worldly visual culture also emerged since the late fifteenth century from the experience of many local youth sent to Portugal—and beyond—to study, as well as that of the realm's ambassadors who toured the courts of Europe. Both groups—mostly men, but also some women—brought back with them memories and souvenirs from their stays. The experience of Dom Miguel de Castro (dates of birth and death unknown) in the mid-seventeenth century illustrates the process. A Kongo ambassador to the Dutch who also traveled to Brazil and Holland, he commissioned a portrait of himself while in the Low Countries in 1643. He brought back the painting to Central Africa along with a range of other items, such as a mirror he purchased and the sword and beaver felt hat the governor of Dutch Brazil gifted to him during his stay in Recife.²¹ The latter two items feature prominently in one of his portraits that remained in Europe and is perhaps similar to the one that traveled back with him to Kongo ([fig. 11](#)).²² Engagement with overseas culture also took the form of object collections of imported luxury items and artworks. For instance, in the mid-seventeenth century, the king of Kongo could draw from his royal estate to dispatch a gilded platter made in Potosí, Peru, as a diplomatic gift.²³

¹⁸ Fromont, 2018.

¹⁹ Fromont, 2014, 148–49.

²⁰ Fromont, 2021.

²¹ Whitehead and Boeseman, 173–74.

²² Jaspas Beckx [attr.], *Dom Miguel de Castro, Emissary of Kongo*, ca. 1643, oil on panel, 75 x 62 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, inv. no. KMS7.

²³ Fromont, 2014, 165; Phipps et al., 211–12.



Figure 10. Unknown Kongo artist. *Mestre's Staff*, Kongo Kingdom, possibly sixteenth to nineteenth century. Wood, 118 cm. Museo Nacional de Etnologia, Lisbon, Portugal, inv. AI 206. Photo: José Paulo Ruas, 2013. Courtesy of Direção-Geral do Património Cultural/Arquivo e Documentação Fotográfica.



Figure 11. Jaspas Beckx [attr.]. *Dom Miguel de Castro, Emissary of Kongo*, ca. 1643. Oil on panel, 75 x 62 cm. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, inv. no. KMS7.

In other words, the print, as well as the Capuchin corpus at large, pictures several dimensions of cross-cultural dialogue. It not only captures the confrontation of ideas and exchange of points of view between friars and Central Africans at the time of the mission, but also records indirectly but significantly the history of cross-cultural engagement from which Central African visual, religious, and political culture took its form in the early modern period, since well before the Capuchin presence.

This *mestre*-friar pair that features in almost every Capuchin vignette picturing missionary work is also present, albeit in less immediately visible ways, in

every image of the corpus. The observations and interpretations of Central African nature, culture, and religion that the images depicted emerged from the close interactions between friars and *mestres*, as well as other Central African interlocutors. Precedents and parallels for this collaborative image-making process existed in the production of dictionaries and catechisms, endeavors of linguistic and cultural translation similar to those at play in the watercolors' depictions of natural and cultural landmarks. The earliest of these works still extant today, a catechism titled *Doutrina christãa* that Jesuit Matheus Cardoso (1584–1625) compiled in 1624, relied on the knowledge of *mestres* with whom the author discussed not only lexical details but also larger questions of etymology.²⁴ In his dedication to the king of Kongo present in some printed versions of the book, Cardoso makes his process explicit. “And because I did not feel like I have enough knowledge for this enterprise,” he wrote to the king of Kongo, “I took advantage of the most signal *mestres* who were at court.”²⁵ Tellingly, he does not mention *mestres* or collaboration in the letter to the archbishop of Lisbon that opens other printings of the same book.²⁶

Another example is the 1648 Kikongo-Latin-Spanish dictionary *Vocabularium latinum, Hispanicum, e Congense* (Latin, Spanish, and Kikongo vocabulary), which was a collective work under the unrecorded coordination of Manuel Roboredo (d. 1665), born in the Central African capital of São Salvador/Mbanza Kongo to a Portuguese father and a sister of the Kongo king.²⁷ A member of the aristocratic elite, he trained in the Kongo educational system put in place and animated by the *mestres* since the sixteenth century, and may have served as a *mestre* himself.²⁸ The *Vocabularium* is a useful parallel to the watercolors. Both works followed to a large extent a European template, some version of Nebrija's Spanish-language dictionary for the *Vocabularium*, and natural history or mores and customs albums for the watercolors. They both used European modes of recording—alphabetic writing or Renaissance-derived illusionism—to record and translate information about Central Africa. They also similarly left largely unnoted the contributions of

²⁴ Cardoso; Thornton, 2013, 69.

²⁵ Cardoso, letter “Ao muito poderoso, & catholico Rey de Congo Dom Pedro Affonso II. deste nome.” The volume containing the letter is under the call number RES.268 at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.

²⁶ Cardoso, letter “Ao illustrissimo Senhor dom Miguel de Castro, Arcebispo Metropolitano da cidade de Lisboa, etc.” The volume containing the letter is under the call number RES. 269 at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.

²⁷ De Kind, De Schryver, and Bostoen; *Vocabularium Latinum, Hispanicum et Congense*.

²⁸ For a biographical notice on Roboredo, see Brásio, 1973, 896–97. About *mestres*, see Brinkman; Thornton, 2013.

Central Africans to their compositions, and, more broadly, the extent to which they were products as well as records of African knowledge.

Yet, moments of exchange between friars and *mestres* do appear in the written and visual documents alike. For instance, in his preface to the reader, present in both versions of the catechism, Cardoso talks briefly about moments of dialogue with Kikongo speakers. He explains that his decision not to translate key terms such as *Cross* or *Holy Spirit* resulted from conversations he had with native speakers.²⁹ In the images, the pair is shown deep in conversation in vignettes such as the one in figure 9 or the landscape print. These visual and written episodes call attention to the role Central Africans played in the projects these documents record. They demonstrate how the European clerics, who formally fill the role of authors in these works of translation, travailed with unnamed Central African interlocutors who were not merely informants or bearers of local information, but essential—and in some cases principal—actors leading the way in these knowledge-making enterprises. The Capuchin vignettes not only picture evenhanded power relations and cooperation, but they also record the active participation of Central Africans in the creation of the mission's discourse about the region that the images picture.

Mestres were essential intermediaries and guides upon whom the friars relied and depended in every endeavor. *Mestres* orchestrated the friars' movements, controlled their interactions with local populations, and even voiced their words. It was indeed the practice, no matter how fluent friars would become in local languages, that *mestres* repeat sermons on their behalf and intercede in the giving of sacraments.³⁰ The production of a discourse made of multiple interlacing voices constituted a central aspect of the relationship between *mestres* and friars. The pair repeated, adapted, and redeployed each other's words, essentially making them their own in the process. *Mestres* conveyed their own versions of clerics' speeches and sermons to Central African audiences while friars recorded Central African oral argumentation and ideas in their manuscripts for their European audience.

The interactions of friars and *mestres* was a process of cross-cultural reckoning and invention at the level of individuals. *Mestres* adapted the Capuchins' words and actions to local ideas and customs, including those about the nature and practice of Christianity honed over almost two centuries before the friars' arrival in the region. In turn, in the vignettes concerned with missionary methods, but also in those about flora, fauna, or local customs, the Capuchins recorded and transcribed the knowledge they gleaned in their conversations with *mestres* and others. The glosses for the vignettes of fauna or flora often

²⁹ Cardoso's prologue to the reader.

³⁰ Bernardino Ignazio da Veza d'Asti, 39.

recorded, but never explicitly acknowledged, the words the friars exchanged with local informants and scholars. They made note, for instance, of local vocabulary derived from several languages. They recorded the use of Portuguese terms such as *fidalgo* (aristocrat), of Kikongo words such as *mbanza* (town), Kimbundu idioms as *libata* (village), as well as creolized or pidgin terms mixing several lexicons—for instance, the neologism *dembo*, a lusitanized version of the ethnonym *ndembu*.³¹ These lexical indications bear witness to the dialogical process of translation and language acquisition that underlay the texts of the Capuchin corpus. At another level, the friars discussed in their works the properties of fruits and animals they learned about in Central Africa in the same breath as information they mobilized from European sources, which they also seldom cited but intended learned readers to identify. They reported, for instance, the anti-hemorrhagic use of manatee ribs they witnessed in the practice of Central African “surgeons” or the anti-venom abilities of the “snake balled *buta*.” They wrote about whaling in Brazil, or about the Franciscan trope of seeing a crucifix in the flesh of a banana, in terms that they derived from European literature.³²

NOT A BLANK PAGE

To put things slightly differently, the *mestre* in the engraving is not who Michel de Certeau once called a “blank (savage) page” for Europeans to inscribe their desires and will through colonization.³³ The French scholar introduced this famous formulation in a 1975 analysis of a print by Jan Van der Straet (1523–1605) in which Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512) encounters a nude, female allegory of America (fig. 12).³⁴ Van der Straet’s image is emblematic of early modern European conceptions and representations of distant Others as inferior, exotic, and prime for political and epistemological conquest. Certeau’s interpretation, in turn, is a flagship moment in the questioning of this ideology and the visual apparatus at its service. The composition of the landscape print, revolving around the defining presence of the European-African pair, could easily invite mistaken interpretations of the scene as another example of the type of encounter images Certeau critiqued.

Yet, although similar in its setting in sylvan wilderness and its organization around a moment of close encounter between a European and a figure native to

³¹ See my translation of the text in Fromont, 2022b. The examples are, respectively, from *Parma Watercolors*, fols. 2^r, 70^r, 45^r, 90^r, 98^r, 39^r.

³² Respectively, *Parma Watercolors*, fols. 20^r, 68^r, 22^r, 35^r.

³³ Certeau, 3.

³⁴ The image also opens Hulme. See also Lia Markey’s discussion of the print in Markey, 2012.



Figure 12. Theodor Galle after Jan van der Straet. *Vespucci Discovering America*, from the *Nova Reperta* series, plate 1 of 19, ca. 1600. Engraving, sheet, 27 x 20 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934.

the landscape, the Central African print is strikingly different from this scene. The landscape, in fact, unfolds in full contrast to Van der Straet's image of European takeover and epistemological imposition. In the print, there is no hint of sexual or territorial conquest. There are no European instruments to suggest an inscription of European will or history on the new land. And indeed, politically, Central Africa remained independent throughout the early modern period except for the thin Portuguese Conquista of Angola. Nor does the African man appear to belong to the realm of nature, guileless, raw, and as-yet uncultured as the female allegory of America. He is a self-possessed protagonist and the worldview that the print captures is at least in part his. On the inked paper, the point of the African's arrow and the tip of the etcher's needle meet and together recreate the line once drawn at the nib of the quill in the original drawing. Composed through the efforts of many minds and hands, the self-aware Central African image gives visual form to the circumstances of its creation. Its composition, though European in form, emerged within a political and intellectual geography that Africans controlled even in the face of persistent European pressures on their social, political, and spiritual affairs, whether through the slave trade, Portuguese and Roman proselytism, or outright

colonial ambitions. It is an image born at the nexus of European and Central African reckonings, conversations, and negotiations about the world that their relationship, at times fraught and at others amicable, was in the process of shaping. Instead of a “blank page” waiting for inscription, the African is here a link in a chain through which knowledge about and from Central Africa and Central Africans is mobilized, reworked in dialogue with Europeans, then recorded and communicated to Italian viewers.

The construction of meaning and knowledge across cultures takes on a particular dimension in this etching. The African stands alongside the European. They are both inscribed and inscribers, subjects and authors, and their intense dialogue suggests shared, if not quite equal, authority over the description and interpretation of the scene. In the ambivalent representation of the African as both object and maker of the European image, I see a trace that makes evident the encounter between subjectivities and the molding of cross-cultural discourses that the image both heralded and contributed to shaping.³⁵

By attentively considering the circumstances of the etching's creation, one can see the Central African natural, social, and religious environment in which the friars' vignettes emerged, and how this environment percolated into the image, molding its form and contents in the broadly conceived moment of its inception. It would be erroneous to consider the corpus as encompassing exclusively European views and commentaries on Kongo and Angola. Despite being European images, following a European format and created for a European audience, they were far from the result of one-sided, isolated reckoning by Europeans. Instead, they derived from dialogues and negotiations between the friars and their Central African hosts, they encompassed in their frames multiple perspectives, and they can only be fully understood as cross-cultural productions.

Even if they were met with a cold reception in Europe and did not circulate far beyond an immediate circle of Capuchin candidates to the mission, the vignettes brought to these few European eyes and minds a discourse about Central African nature, culture, and faith honed in cross-cultural reckonings. Tellingly, the same faith in the power of images to instruct, convey information, and shape minds on which the friars relied in their visually rich apostolate in Kongo and Angola underlies the functioning mode of their practical guides. The vignettes they designed were aimed at impressing on the minds of novice missionaries the natural, social, and pastoral specificities of the Central African missions. The guides, produced over a hundred years, were received and put aside by the ecclesiastical hierarchy with an unease that is one of the most eloquent testaments to their unacknowledged dimension as more than wholly

³⁵ Gaudio, 2008, 7.

European products. Indeed, the unusual “salutary advice” that the practical guides conferred to novices reflected the fraught relationship the friars maintained with the Central Africans who hosted them and directed their missionary practice.³⁶ Their contents, which the Roman elite called “nonsense” and “contrary to the universal taste of people,” encompassed knowledge the friars compiled and articulated in dialogue with their hosts, whose insights they quietly sought and silently recorded.³⁷

COLONIAL COMPARISONS: VISIBILITY AND INVISIBILITY OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL

Attention to conditions of inception makes visible the cross-cultural dimension of images such as those that emerged in the Capuchin Central African missions, even if that dimension remained invisible and unrecorded at the time of its making as well as in more recent moments of interpretation. Literary scholars have addressed since the 1990s similar silencing, pointing to the “historically silent”³⁸ presence of the colonial world in Europe’s canonical texts.³⁹ Byron Hamman extended the critique to the visual in a materialist, postcolonial reading of Velazquez’s (1599–1660) *Las Meninas* (1656) that brought to the fore the entanglements the painting showcased between Madrid and its American colonies.⁴⁰ Other scholars of visual and material culture have found testaments of otherwise little perceivable entangled histories of visual practices between Europe and other parts of the world in studies of motifs, pigments, and materials.⁴¹ I propose here a complementary approach that considers the conditions and trajectories of the creation of European images concerned with the extra-European world as a terrain to probe in order to reveal the otherwise invisible cross-cultural entanglements from which they emerged and took their form. Seeking to identify such a dimension, however, brings up serious questions about the conditions under which the mixing of different perspectives and modes of expression in images becomes visible or remains unnoticed to their intended viewers or to observers removed in time and space from their making, including twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars. By comparing the Central African project to two examples of Franciscan missionary visual

³⁶ Giovanni Belotti da Romano.

³⁷ Letter of Fortunato Alamandini to the Propaganda Fide, in Pistoni, 29–40.

³⁸ The phrase is from Merrell, 114.

³⁹ Fraiman; Said, 80–96; Spivak.

⁴⁰ Hamann.

⁴¹ Leibsohn; Singh; Shaffer; Wang; Boone and Cummins.

productions whose cross-cultural dimensions have been robustly studied and theorized, historians can find coordinates to approach these interrogations.

Consider, for instance, in counterpoint to the African's self-possessed gesture of engagement in cross-cultural dialogue seen in the Central African landscape print, how the same long stick suggests a strikingly different relationship between a friar and his elite Indigenous audience in a scene of preaching in sixteenth-century Mexico. In the composition in [figure 13](#), which Mexico-raised Franciscan Diego Valadés (ca. 1533–ca. 1582) created for his *Rhetorica Christiana* (Christian rhetoric, 1579), it is a friar who holds the stick that points toward European-style images.⁴² The teaching, moreover, takes place within a European-style built environment featuring the telltale arches unused in Mesoamerican architecture before the arrival of Europeans. Another illustration in the book elaborates on Franciscan catechization techniques, depicting the friars teaching in a large courtyard using a range of visual pedagogical tools ([fig. 14](#)).

Valadés's volume on sacred oratory recorded for a European audience the evangelization methods Franciscans developed in the sixteenth century amid the Iberian takeover of Mesoamerica's Indigenous physical and spiritual world.⁴³ Central to the catechization strategies was the use of images in sermons and instruction, which was, fray Diego proudly (and erroneously) claimed, an invention of his order for the Mexican missionary field.⁴⁴ Valadés describes his order's recourse to visual catechization not only as a means to teach the illiterate but also as a mode of imprinting Christianity onto the catechumens' souls.⁴⁵ Ambitious and multifaceted, the optimistic, millenarian proselytization aimed to usher conversion through the acquisition of European visual, mental, and bodily habits.⁴⁶ Featuring Valadés's illustrious predecessor and mentor Pedro de Gante (ca. 1486–1572) as their protagonist, the images suggest a unidirectional process of cross-cultural transmission of religious and visual ideas and practices. In an asymmetric encounter with a captive audience, the compositions show European clerics forcibly substituting Indigenous worldviews, ceremonies, images, and architecture with Christian doctrine, rituals, and visual and built environments.

Historians of colonial Latin American visual culture have amply demonstrated that if the images reflected to some extent actual practices implemented in sixteenth-century Mexico, their idealized, overly simple vision of

⁴² Valadés.

⁴³ French historian Serge Gruzinski speaks of the "colonization of the imaginary" in Gruzinski, 1988. See also Gruzinski, 2001, 65–67.

⁴⁴ Valadés, 93–96.

⁴⁵ Edgerton, 118; Esquivel.

⁴⁶ Gruzinski, 1988, 241; Morales.



Figure 13. Diego Valadés [designer and etcher]. “Friar Preaching to Native Converts,” from P. F. Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana ad concionandi et orandi usum accommodata, utriusque facultatis exemplis suo loco insertis quae quidem ex Indorum maximè deprompta sunt historiis. Vnde praeter doctrinam, sum[m]a quoque delectatio comparabitur. Auctore Rdo admodum P. F. Didaco Valades* (Perugia: Pietro Giacompo Petrucci, 1579), 111. Copper plate engraving and etching, 24 x 18 cm. Photograph courtesy of the Newberry Library.

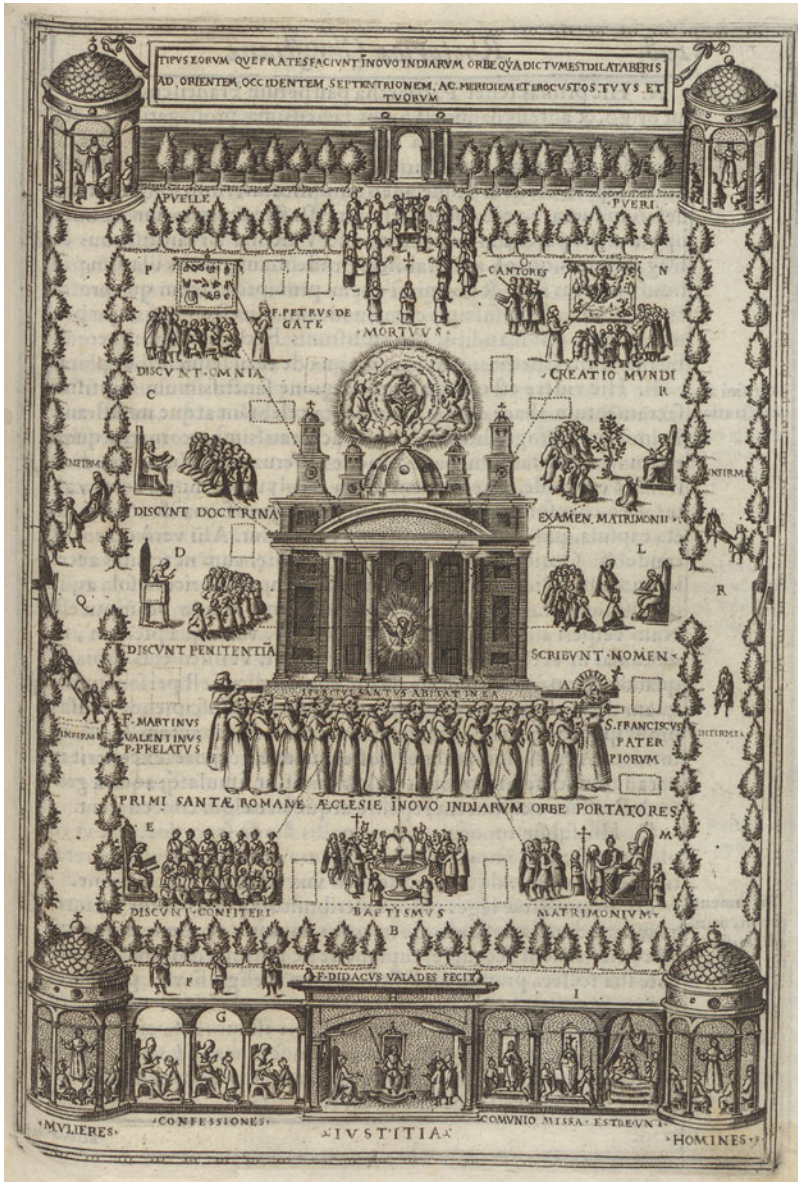


Figure 14. Diego Valadés [designer and etcher]. “The Ideal Atrium,” from P. F. Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana ad concionandi et orandi usum accommodata, vtriusque facultatis exemplis suo loco insertis quae quidem ex Indorum maximè de prompta sunt historiis. Vnde praeter doctrinam, sum[m]a quoque delectatio comparabitur. Auctore Rdo admodvm P. F. Didaco Valades* (Perugia: Pietro Giacopo Petrucci, 1579), 107. Copper plate etching, 24 x 18 cm. Photograph courtesy of the Newberry Library.

catechization as straightforward imposition was also largely a fantasy, the colonial project being in fact a constant “dialectical struggle” between colonizers and colonized.⁴⁷ Not only did the project of erasure and substitution fail, but the visual vocabulary of Europe that lay and religious Spaniards heralded as an instrument of conquest in fact almost immediately became a medium of Mesoamerican expression that Indigenous communities used alongside images and motifs of deep local roots.⁴⁸

The historical figure of Valadés emblemizes the complexities and contradictions of colonialism, the societies it created, and the interpretations scholars have brought to bear on its cultural productions. Long held in scholarship as a mestizo born in Mexico from a Spanish father and an Indigenous mother, evidence introduced in the 1980s by Isaac Vázquez Janeiro and echoed in the 2010s in the works of César Chaparro Gómez and Delfín Ortega Sánchez would indicate that he was Iberian and arrived in Mesoamerica at the age of four.⁴⁹ Both biographical trajectories portray a man who spent his formative years in Mexico, but diverge on the nature of his biological background as either a Spaniard or a descendant of both European and Indigenous parents.

The distinction is significant in many regards, and of dubious interest in others. Valadés’s genealogical but most importantly legal racial identity in early colonial Mexico would have weighed heavily in the racially fraught environment in which he composed the *Rhetorica Christiana*. The humanity of Indigenous Mesoamericans and their ability to receive the Christian faith had been the subject of heated debates in the decades preceding the book’s publication. In 1555, the Mexican church hierarchy restricted Indigenous people, individuals of African origins or descent, and those with racially mixed parentage from certain sacraments, including ordination. Despite this pushback if a mestizo, or thanks to his Iberian parentage, Valadés rose to the prominent charge of procurator general of the Franciscan order in Rome. From this position, he composed a book that recorded Franciscan evangelization methods, but also articulated a fervent defense of Indigenous people. It exposed the sophistication of their knowledge and representation systems, which were, he argued, fully commensurable with classical thought and visual techniques.⁵⁰ His argument relied on illustrations he included—for instance, to showcase

⁴⁷ Cummins, 1995b, 75.

⁴⁸ Leibsohn; Magaloni Kerpel.

⁴⁹ Vázquez Janeiro, 847–56; Ortega Sánchez, 39–40. See also the unpublished work by Stephanie Porras on Valadés: “Foul Biting, or Diego Valadés and the Medium of Print.” I do not have a position in the debate. *Mestizo* is the historical term used in Hispanic America to designate a person with one Indigenous and one European parent.

⁵⁰ See Bolzoni.

the Mesoamerican calendar, or to demonstrate the compatibility of Indigenous images and pictographic signs with mnemonic devices based on the Latin alphabet.⁵¹

At stake in the method Valadés described was the communication of Christian doctrine across cultures—a task made possible, in the Franciscan's view, by images used not only as mnemonic aids or substitutes to books for the illiterate but also as sites where Europeans and non-Europeans alike could experience Christian truth.⁵² Accordingly, the *Rhetorica Christiana* had two central goals, as art historian Tom Cummins has argued. First, it established the ability of Mesoamericans to perceive divine truth through images. Second, it demonstrated how images could serve as a channel through which the Word of God could travel from catechizers to catechumens.⁵³ Images could play this role in early colonial Mexico, fray Diego argued, because Mesoamericans, like Europeans, understood that they ultimately referred to a truth beyond themselves. In the last illustration of the book, the friar and his converted audience make the vivid experience of the transcendent truth that Christian pictures render accessible (fig. 15). They have entered into the space of the image itself, standing and kneeling at the foot of a crucifixion in the style of Dürer (1471–1528) or Marten de Vos (1532–1603).⁵⁴ There they share a common experience of the truth of the Gospel, a truth to which the image refers and that it makes vividly present. However, even in this shared space and shared experience of Christian revelation, the colonial hierarchy is still at play; it is still the cleric who points and tells, controlling the discursive field.⁵⁵

Valadés's person and project embody and record how different streams of European and Mesoamerican knowledge and epistemology coexisted, functioned alongside each other, and came together in the hands of Iberian and Indigenous actors in the early decades of the colonial era in Latin America. His images show a model for evangelization that gave friars the monopoly of speech, obfuscating the dialogical nature of religious encounters. Moreover, his images occasionally juxtaposed but did not mix visual traditions, bringing to the fore the issue of visibility of the cross-cultural dimension of visual documents, in divergent fashion from the Central African print. Dialogue between ideas and interlocutors from different horizons was central to the two projects, both in the conduct of the mission and in the conception of their images. Yet it

⁵¹ Valadés, 100–01.

⁵² Cummins, 1995a.

⁵³ Cummins, 1995a.

⁵⁴ About the precedents for the crucifixion, see Sartor, 57.

⁵⁵ Other images of catechization in the *Rhetorica Christiana* include that of the evangelization of the population that Nahua people called by the derogatory term of *Chichimeca*, with the friar once again dominating speech: see Valadés, 225.



Figure 15. Diego Valadés [designer and etcher]. “Crucifixion Scene,” from P. F. Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana ad concionandi et orandi usum accommodata, utriusque facultatis exemplis suo loco insertis quae quidem ex Indorum maximè deprompta sunt historiis. Vnde praeter doctrinam, sum[m]a quoque delectatio comparabitur. Auctore Rdo admodvm P. F. Didaco Valades* (Perugia: Pietro Giacompo Petrucci, 1579), between 220 and 221. Copper plate etching and engraving, 24 x 18 cm. Photograph courtesy of the Newberry Library.

occupied a very different space in each project. Conversations between friars and Central Africans featured narratively in the Capuchin watercolors concerned with missionary work but have no place in Valadés’s exposé. Concurrently, the *Rhetorica Christiana*’s explicit engagement with and use of Indigenous images and modes of recording information do not have any parallels in the Capuchin images. In the Central African corpus, cooperation is suggested by picturing scenes of actual dialogue, but it is not made visible through style, iconography, or engagement with Central African use of images as instruments of lay or religious knowledge.

Another Mesoamerican Franciscan project sharing some of the goals of the Capuchin watercolors provides an additional example of images in which culturally diverse sources have remained visible. Concerned that the proper understanding of pre-Hispanic cultures and religions was essential to their work of catechization, the second generation of friars active in colonial Mexico embarked on ambitious projects aimed at recording and translating local knowledge. Friar Bernardino de Sahagún’s (1499–1590) *Historia general de las cosas de*

Nueva España (General history of the things found in New Spain), the so-called Florentine Codex, composed between 1555 and 1577, is perhaps the best known of these endeavors.⁵⁶ Not unlike the much later Capuchin Central African illustrated manuscripts, albeit at an immensely larger scale, it took the form of a record of flora, fauna, mores, and customs, as well as of the history of Mesoamerica compiled for the benefit of future missionaries and a curious European public. The Florentine Codex is the result of colonial interactions and intense dialogue between Europeans and Mesoamericans in conception, form, and execution. It emerged from the combined efforts of Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, the central Mexican elders who responded to a questionnaire he sent them, and the Indigenous students of the Franciscan College of Santa Cruz at Tlatelolco who executed the texts and images.⁵⁷ It recorded Indigenous history, knowledge, and practices, presented predominantly through templates derived from Europe's classical tradition and using, to a large extent, visual tools steeped in late medieval and early Renaissance conventions of manuscript illumination. Its Nahuatl main text written with the Latin alphabet appears alongside a parallel Spanish discussion of the same topics; its images serve as illustrations. Stylistically, the Indigenous artists who painted the vignettes brought Renaissance techniques of perspective and framing drawn from European examples into dialogue with Mesoamerican visual conventions such as the use of glyphs and flat backgrounds.

European-derived and Mesoamerican architecture, for instance, share the backdrop of an illustration depicting a merchant of flowers and aromatic staffs (fig. 16). A masonry opening in an arched gateway encloses the left three quarters of the image's background, while smaller stones stacked around a pillar and lintel construction occupy the right quarter of the frame. The man on the left sits on a box-like object, an *icpalli* (elevated seat of authority) rendered three-dimensionally by black lines marking its edges. The woman sits on a reed carpet to the right. The woven ground covering is flat and reaches the edge of the vignette in a way that denies perspectival reading. The artist, however, pictures the woman in three quarters, giving her a volumetric presence that the man, seated on the box and shown in sharp profile, does not have, despite the shaded pleats in his cloak. Objects referring to the wares for sale float around the background of the scene in the manner of Mesoamerican glyphs. The Indigenous artist nimbly mixes and merges European and Mexica visual grammar in the image. That the vignette emerged at the crux of multiple pictorial traditions, languages, and voices is highly visible at the level of form. The same does not hold true for the formally wholly European Capuchin Central

⁵⁶ Bernardino de Sahagún; Peterson and Terraciano; Magaloni Kerpel; Boone.

⁵⁷ López Austin.

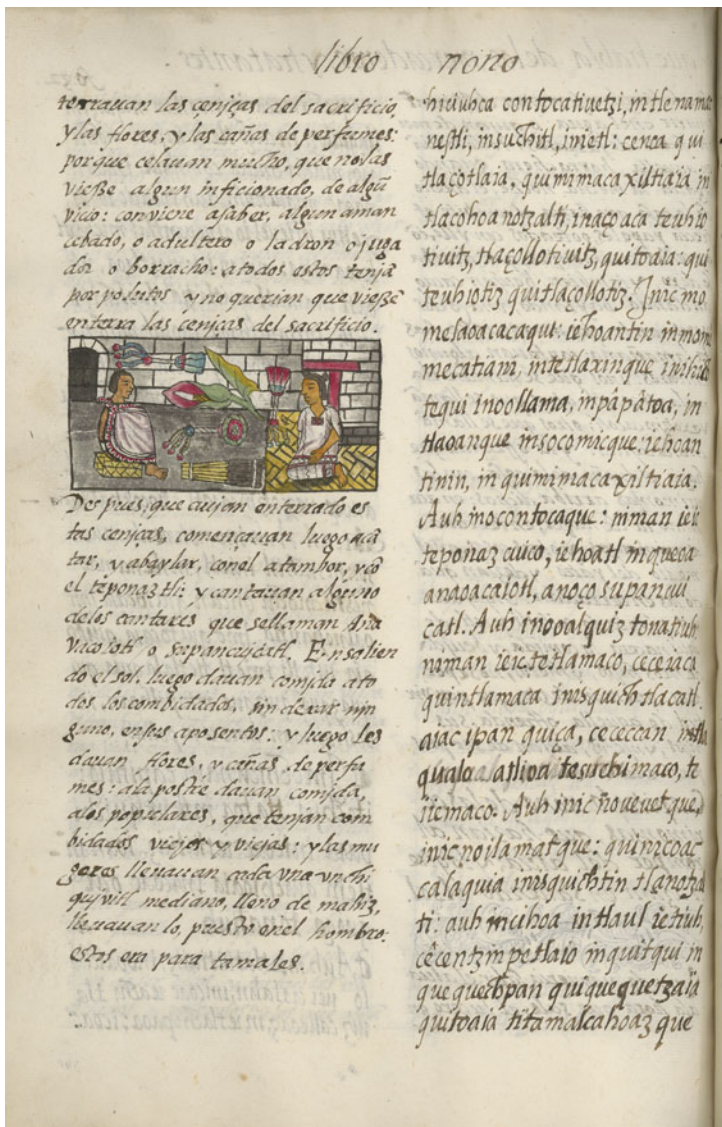


Figure 16. Unnamed Mesoamerican artist(s). Merchant of tobacco pipes, flower arrangements and aromatic staffs, from Bernardino de Sahagún and Indigenous contributors, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (Florentine Codex), ca. 1577, book 9, fol. 32^v. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, MS Med. Palat. 219, fol. 340^v. By permission of the Ministry of Culture. Further reproduction of any type forbidden.

African vignettes, or for the images in Valadés, where Mesoamerican signs and symbols are juxtaposed but not integrated with European classical compositions.

Valadés's influential volume was published in Perugia, Italy in 1579, and the Capuchins headed to Central Africa could have had access to it.⁵⁸ Similarly, Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia* arrived in Italy in the late 1580s, through Franciscan cardinal Ferdinando de Medici, a figure deeply involved in the church's overseas endeavors as protectorate of the patriarch of Antioch and Alexandria and the kingdom of Ethiopia, as organizer of the *Stamperia Orientale*, and as supporter of the publication of missionary texts.⁵⁹ Copies of the manuscript and other works about the Americas circulated in Roman ecclesiastical circles throughout the early modern period. It is not clear what exact missionary material the Capuchins involved in the Kongo and Angola mission may have seen, but they were interested in missionary practices developed in other contexts and could have seen or heard about some of these works. Vice prefect Luca da Caltanissetta (1644–1702), for instance, compared at the end of the seventeenth century the rules governing his work in Kongo to those he experienced while passing through Brazil, or those of "French missionaries in the Americas."⁶⁰ Be that as it may, their images did not draw any direct parallels with the American illustrations in their format or even in their creation techniques. In a remarkable contrast to the American Franciscan missions, there is no evidence in the documentary record that Capuchins even attempted to create schools or ateliers to train Central Africans in European artistic traditions. There is also no indication that African image makers had a direct hand in the production of the Capuchin watercolors and drawings.

The three visual projects are distinct in their scope, modes of creation, and results. Comparing them is nonetheless particularly revealing. It underlines some of the many ways in which images can be products, documents, and vectors of cross-cultural encounters, reckonings, and negotiations. Indigenous artists combined image-making techniques and styles from different visual vocabularies to create visibly multi-sourced vignettes in the Florentine Codex Mexican visual encyclopedia. A man at ease in both Mesoamerican and European intellectual and pictorial idioms worked at establishing

⁵⁸ I have not identified a Capuchin library holding the book in the seventeenth century, but a copy was in the Observant library in Bologna. Several volumes on missions and the Indies had already entered into Capuchin libraries before 1600, the date of a general inventory. For instance, Pietro Martinez and Giovanni d'Atienza's *Raguaglio d'alcune missioni* (Report on some missions, 1593) was in the Capuchin Bologna and Palermo libraries. See Martinez and d'Atienza, and the online database rici.vatlib.it.

⁵⁹ Markey, 2008, 204–06.

⁶⁰ Letter of Luca da Caltanissetta, vice prefect of Congo Mission, undated, in *Scritture Referite nei Congressi Africa*, vol. 1, Archivio Storico de Propaganda Fide, Vatican, fol. 65^r.

commensurability between images he juxtaposed but did not mix or merge in the *Rhetorica Christiana*. The Central African vignettes, which were by all indication produced without contributions from African hands and which did not engage with African visual traditions in any way visible in their style or iconography, featured cross-cultural dialogue as narrative motif. The three projects born of European missionary endeavors share the similar goals of recording and translating knowledge from and about non-European locations in order to make it accessible to a European audience. They similarly achieved these goals through commensurate modes of engagement with local people—that is, through some form of dialogue, whether implicit or explicit, acknowledged or disavowed.⁶¹ All three projects are works of cross-cultural collaboration, but that work takes different forms in their visual production, which makes their heterogeneous origins more or less visible to early modern observers and scholars in later centuries.

THE DECEPTION OF VISIBILITY

Art historians Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn have warned eloquently against what they call the “deception of visibility” in approaches to objects and images crafted at the crux of cultures. Analyzing cross-cultural interactions through their visible traces, they argue, leads interpreters to err in “find[ing] that the mixings that matter the most are those we can see.”⁶² Many are the pitfalls of such emphasis on visible recognition. One is the risk to essentialize the people and cultures at hand. Another is a misplaced emphasis on surface appearances. For instance, one would be amiss only to recognize Indigenous contributions in Latin American colonial art when and because they “look pre-Hispanic.”⁶³ Doing so would overlook the deep transformations that Indigenous people faced but also ushered as they engaged with once European ideas, objects, and images, soon making them partly or wholly their own.⁶⁴ It also fails to recognize that in Mexico, as elsewhere around the early modern globe, artists and patrons embraced the visual vocabulary of Europe for their own purposes, with or without colonial imposition, and through an entire spectrum of modes of stylistic and technical appropriation.⁶⁵ Objects of contact ranged

⁶¹ I hurry to add that these modes took on very different scales and intensity in Mexico and in Central Africa.

⁶² Dean and Leibsohn, 13.

⁶³ Dean and Leibsohn, 15.

⁶⁴ The ability or inability of Indigenous American populations to adapt—artistically and otherwise—to changing circumstances on their own terms has been one of the founding debates of the field of colonial Latin American art history. See Kubler; Boone and Cummins; Esquivel.

⁶⁵ Leibsohn; Singh; Shaffer; Kotani. About the term *appropriation*, see Wang.

from robust reworkings to productions visually indistinguishable from their once foreign prototypes.⁶⁶ Therein lies another deception of visibility: that art historians' desires to identify and interpret these invisibly mixed objects on account of their makers' biographies risks fetishizing the makers themselves.⁶⁷ Since cultures are always heterogeneous, and mixings not always remarkable to historical actors or visible to later interpreters, Dean and Leibsohn remind us that recognizing mixings, or not, is above all political.

Studies of mixings in the visual and material culture of the early modern world have been guided by a political imperative to lay bare the oppressive mechanism of colonialism and imperialism and bring to the fore the multivalent, generative resistance it faced. Scholars have probed objects produced in the four corners of the early modern world and analyzed the nature and dynamics of interactions that they recorded and participated in shaping. A central theoretical current in these studies since the second half of the twentieth century has been the perspective of postcolonial theory, through which authors shed light on the role of visual and textual images in the conception and implementation of colonial projects and endeavored to recover the always imperfectly silenced voices of the people these projects oppressed.⁶⁸ The notion of hybridity, understood as the creation of multivalent objects in the generative and fraught contact zones of cross-cultural encounters, has been a key contribution of these analyses.⁶⁹ Born of an intellectual urgency for a redefinition of global relations in the decades following World War II, matured in the wake of political decolonization, and still keenly relevant in the long aftermath of the independence era, postcolonial theory and the notion of hybridity have enduringly shaped understandings of cross-cultural interactions in the early modern and modern periods.

After the turn of the second millennium, in recognition that a focus on asymmetries of power and on the related notion of hybridity does not equally illuminate all creations born at the crux of cultures, scholars considering cross-cultural early modern visual productions within and outside European colonial projects have offered alternative theoretical frameworks. Alessandra Russo, for example, crafted an analysis of sixteenth-century arts in colonial Mesoamerica that pushes to the side what she terms "the sloppy use of complex categories" such as "subaltern" derived from the language of postcolonial analyses crafted

⁶⁶ Dean and Leibsohn, 22.

⁶⁷ Dean and Leibsohn, 21–23.

⁶⁸ Readers may refer to two edited volumes that emblemized the recognition of postcolonial theory as an established field: Ashcroft et al.; Chrisman and Williams. Art historical questions around Orientalism, visual hybridity, and the role of the museum, among other topics, featured prominently in the field.

⁶⁹ Bhabha; Pratt, 1991; Umberger and Cummins; Boone and Cummins.

for radically different historical contexts than the one she considers. Instead, she proposes starting with the objects themselves and considers the local, pragmatic, unstable arrangements underlying their creation as “untranslatable images.”⁷⁰ The notion of “space of correlation” I coined to consider the Christian arts of the kingdom of Kongo produced outside of a colonial situation followed a similar object-focused perspective: that cross-cultural creations should be investigated as unspecified domains that historical actors inscribe with meaning through strategic, cumulative, and generative merging of elements from several traditions.⁷¹ Writing about the visual culture that emerged in the midst of rapidly shifting power dynamics in eighteenth-century Western India, art historian Holly Shaffer turns to the metaphor of grafting. The botanical trope allows her to analyze the violent, fought-over, bold, and eminently creative artistic combinations that British East India Company officials and Maratha Maratha rulers operated as they used art for political, social, and religious aims.⁷²

If each of these theoretical contributions emerged from an attentive consideration of a specific social, historical, and visual situation, their analytical insights can productively shed light on a variety of other contexts. Such an array of tools allows historians to approach the complexities of human interactions spurred by fraught or peaceful long-distance commerce, imperialism, and religious encounters in the early modern world, with necessary attention to differences in their nature, process, and outcomes. They also prove useful in crafting analyses that take into account that not all early modern cross-cultural transactions unfolded in the wake of colonial ambitions or control. Colonialism itself was not a uniform project, even within a single imperial domain, and analysis should be prepared to address its many guises and myriad faces.

The Capuchin Central African corpus, which emerged outside of a political context of oppression and resistance, demands an approach that looks beyond asymmetry of power as a central exegetical apparatus. Its interpretation as cross-cultural object, however, must begin with an analysis of the conditions of visibility of its heterogeneity, conditions shaped by European early modern imperial ambitions and the ideologies that emerged in their support. That the Capuchin Central African corpus did not appear as mixed to their original viewers or to later scholars points to a double veil. The first, in the early modern period, belonged in the construction of documents that may have consciously or unconsciously ignored or silenced their Indigenous sources.⁷³ The second comes about in the moment of

⁷⁰ Russo.

⁷¹ Fromont, 2011b.

⁷² Shaffer.

⁷³ “Early modernity was marked by elite, male Europeans’ dependence upon subaltern technologies and their ‘disavowal’ of this dependence”: Norton, 20.

interpretation in a certain mode of reading that fails to recognize the cross-cultural dimension when its traces are not visible at the level of form or documented in the biography of their maker, or when it has been naturalized to the point of becoming invisible. The Central African corpus illustrates both types of silencing.

The first veil came from the friars' only recognizing their Central African sources implicitly, if at all. The second belongs to the ease with which their vignettes could be read as wholly European images in later analyses, which erroneously posit the existence of a homogeneous Europe whose core would have remained impervious to change by contact with distant cultures.⁷⁴ The same views also imply that European authors and artists, even in addressing non-European topics, could wholly apprehend and represent on their own terms elements of visual, intellectual, and religious cultures from faraway lands. In fact, contact with distant peoples and engagement with the foreign have often been couched, in this view, as affirming rather than challenging European self-conceptions and intellectual processes. To put it another way, in this perspective, European artists and patrons rarely experienced influence and did not acculturate or undergo syncretism, but rather consumed imported goods, collected curious *naturalia* and *artificialia* from indeterminate geographies they called the Indies, and cultivated a taste for the exotic.⁷⁵

This is an interpretative pitfall in which much of the scholarship about the global early modern period risks falling when not paying enough heed to the non-European dimensions of European cultural productions. Scholars have called attention to this danger for decades—for instance, in new imperial history, yet this position has not gained much traction in the analysis of cases falling outside of colonial and imperial contexts, or in the interpretation of travel literature and other early modern proto-ethnographic compendia.⁷⁶ The role of art historians of the early modern period is to recognize and analyze the disavowal of mixings in the early modern period and not overlook the cross-cultural dimension in considerations of European visual culture. Yes, as Dean and Leibsohn affirm, looking for these mixings is political. It is also imperative in the post-2020 world, a moment of profound questioning and reconsideration of the tenets and methods of the fields of art history and early modern studies. Reflecting

⁷⁴ This is the so-called blunted impact theory, according to which growing European engagement with the world outside of its own shores had little effect on its people: see Elliott. For a discussion and rebuttal of this stance, see Rubiés.

⁷⁵ I do not wish to discredit the remarkable scholarship behind such publications; I merely want to point to trends in the perspective they showcased. See, for example, Findlen; Impey and MacGregor; Markey, 2016; Brienen; Levenson; Levenson et al.

⁷⁶ Scholars have called attention to this pitfall for decades, yet this position has only slowly gained traction: see Pratt, 1992; Farago; Casid; Kriz; Barringer; Hamann.

critically on the nature and shape of these disciplines' canon, historiography, and methodologies requires new approaches to recognize and tackle this double disavowal.

CONCLUSION

Now, how does one, in practice, make visible what has heretofore been invisible by virtue of design or because of certain modes of interpretation? There are, no doubt, many answers to this question, and I propose here but one, which the corpus I consider has inspired. The method is to interrogate an image's inception, taking seriously the context of its creation as holding authorial agency. The circumstances of the Capuchin Central African mission—willed, controlled, and largely sponsored by the local elite—shaped the images the friars produced. Visually, the Capuchins drew exclusively on European motifs, style, and genres to create their images. Yet these elements yielded compositions that bore witness to the context of their creation in Central Africa and with Central Africans. The presence of the crucial figure of the Central African church master, the *mestre* behind each friar in vignettes of missionary work, is a key motif in this regard. The men are featured in the compositions in close physical proximity to the Capuchins in an arrangement that easily and purposefully invited readings of their presence as subaltern figures. Yet, in fact, the *mestres* did not assist the friars. Socially, they enabled their presence. Politically, they made their activities in the region possible. Intellectually, they imparted to the mission essential religious, practical, scientific, and linguistic knowledge. Although the surface of the page attempted to present them as the friars' subordinates, they stood firmly in the visible and invisible structuring lines of the vignettes not as aides but as the key collaborators thanks to whom the friars brought the images to life.

Literary scholar Leo Cabranes-Grant has argued that intercultural exchange increases the legibility of poesis, understood as the coming into being of a cultural object. I argue in this essay that the reverse is equally true: that attention to the Capuchin images' processes and conditions of creation increases the legibility of intercultural exchange as one of their originative and constitutive features. Considering the inception, or poesis, of representations as a deep domain of inquiry in itself sheds light on the otherwise hardly visible cross-cultural dimension of the Capuchin Central African vignettes as expressions of a discourse about nature, culture, and faith that Capuchins and Central Africans co-constructed in the course of their interactions. The Capuchin images are not European-conceived and -executed pictures of Kongo and Angola and their inhabitants, but rather are pictures from Central Africa molded by the dialogue that unfolded between the friars and Central Africans. To be clear, this is not—or not only—about reading against the grain or uncovering subaltern agency hidden

within the images. It is an attempt at seriously considering the origins of their representations in cross-cultural collaboration, albeit one that, in this case, did not leave visible traces in their style, iconography, or modes of production.

The stakes are high in recognizing cross-cultural poesis as a key dimension of at least some early modern European images—a dimension that falls outside of European cultural and epistemological hegemony and demonstrates that the images in question are products of multiple perspectives. On the one hand, this recognition helps to provincialize Europe and to stress how its engagement with the world beyond its shores shaped its own visual core in ways that have been both visible and invisible, in early modern times and in the present, because of ideological disavowal or interpretative shortsightedness.⁷⁷ On the other hand, it responds to a fundamental challenge scholars face in the study of early modern global interactions in the disproportion—for many, but by no means all, regions—between the large archive of documents produced by Europeans and the limited number of sources authored by Indigenous historical actors. This discrepancy is born from the history and structures of archives and is heightened by a historiography that has given outsized emphasis to certain types of documents over others as authoritative sources. New research into existing depositories, expanded methodologies, theoretical innovations, and renewed attention to Indigenous knowledge are steadily closing that gap, though these endeavors often remain dependent for access, funding, and validation on the backing of institutions created for and in support of the very archives and knowledge systems they aim to complement or outright challenge.⁷⁸ I propose an approach that looks anew at a range of visual and written documentation about the four corners of the world—records produced, nominally, by Europeans and without immediately visible non-European traits—as cross-cultural productions. Identifying and analyzing the forms of interactions that gave shape to the documents in the European archive concerned with the world beyond its shores—or, in other words, considering their cross-cultural poesis—directs a decolonial lens at their content and opens the door for counter-hegemonic interpretations. It also, and most crucially, holds the promise of a richer, more nuanced understanding of the intricacies, range, and complexity of the human interactions and cultural productions that shaped the early modern world and the long shadow it casts over the present historical moment.

⁷⁷ The phrase, of course, is inspired by Dipesh Chakrabarty.

⁷⁸ For scholarship not cited elsewhere in this article, see Brewer-García; N. R. Jones; Bennett; Guerrero Mosquera; Bauer and Norton; Caplan; Johnson.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Barringer, Timothy John. *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain*. London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2005.
- Bauer, Ralph, and Marcy Norton. "Introduction: Entangled Trajectories; Indigenous and European Histories." *Colonial Latin American Review* 26.1 (2017): 1–17.
- Bennett, Herman L. *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019.
- Bernardino Ignazio da Veza d'Asti. *Missione in Pratica de PP: Cappuccini Italiani ne Regni di Congo, Angola, et adiacenti, brevemente esposta per lume, e guida de Missionari a quelle Ste Missioni destinati*. Biblioteca Vaticana, Vatican City, MS Borg. Lat. 316. Ca. 1750.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Bindman, David, Henry Louis Gates, and Karen C. C. Dalton, eds. *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume III, Part 1: From the "Age of Discovery" to the Age of Abolition: Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Bindman, David, Henry Louis Gates, and Karen C. C. Dalton, eds. *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume III, Part 2: From the "Age of Discovery" to the Age of Abolition: Europe and the World Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011a.
- Bindman, David, Henry Louis Gates, and Karen C. C. Dalton, eds. *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume III, Part 3: From the "Age of Discovery" to the Age of Abolition: The Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011b.
- Bolzoni, Lina. "Mexican Nature in Diego Valadés' *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579)." *Studies in the History of Art* 69 (2008): 126–41.
- Boone, Elizabeth Hill. *Descendants of Aztec Pictography: The Cultural Encyclopedias of Sixteenth-Century Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020.
- Boone, Elizabeth Hill, and Tom Cummins, eds. *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 2nd through 4th October 1992*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998.
- Brásio, António. *Monumenta Missionaria Africana: África Ocidental*. Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1952.
- Brásio, António. *História e missiologia: Ineditos e esparsos*. Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1973.
- Brewer-García, Larissa. *Beyond Babel: Translations of Blackness in Colonial Peru and New Granada*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Brienen, Rebecca Parker. *Visions of Savage Paradise: Albert Eckhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.
- Brinkman, Inge. "Kongo Interpreters, Traveling Priests, and Political Leaders in the Kongo Kingdom (15th–19th Century)." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 49.2 (2016): 255–76.
- Cadornega, António de Oliveira de, and José Matias Delgado. *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 1680[–1681]*. 3 vols. Lisbon: Agência-Geral das Colónias Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, 1940.

- Caplan, Allison. "The Living Feather: Tonalli in Nahua Featherwork Production." *Ethnohistory* 67.3 (2020): 383–406.
- Cardoso, Matheus. *Doutrina Christaa de novo traducida na lingua do Reyno do Congo*. Lisbon: Por Geraldo da Vinha, 1624.
- Casid, Jill H. *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Cavazzi, Giovanni Antonio. *Descrição histórica dos três reinos do Congo, Matamba e Angola*. Trans. Graciano Maria de Leguzzano. 2 vols. Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1965.
- Cavazzi, Giovanni Antonio, and Fortunato Alamandini. *Istorica descrizione de' tre regni Congo, Matamba, et Angola sitvati nell' Etiopia inferiore occidentale e delle missioni apostoliche esercitateui da religiosi Capuccini*. Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1687.
- Certeau, Michel de. *L'écriture de l'Histoire*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Chaparro Gómez, César. *Fray Diego Valadés evangelizador franciscano en Nueva España*. Mérida: CEXECI, 2015.
- Chrisman, Laura, and Patrick Williams, eds. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Cummins, Thomas. "From Lies to Truth: Colonial Ekphrasis and the Act of Crosscultural Translation." In *Reframing the Renaissance*, ed. Claire Farago, 152–74, 326–29. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995a.
- Cummins, Thomas. "The Madonna and the Horse: Becoming Colonial in New Spain and Peru." In *Native Artists and Patrons in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Emily Good Umberger and Tom Cummins, 52–81. Vol. 7 of *Phoebus: A Journal of Art History*. Tempe: Arizona State University, 1995b.
- De Kind, Jasper, Gilles-Maurice De Schryver, Koen Bostoen. "Pushing Back the Origin of Bantu Lexicography: The *Vocabularium Congense* of 1652, 1928, 2012." *Lexikos* 22.1 (2012): 159–94.
- Dean, Carolyn, and Dana Leibsohn. "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America." *Colonial Latin American Review* 12.1 (2003): 5–35.
- Edgerton, Samuel Y. *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico; With Photos by Jorge Pérez de Lara*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001.
- Elliott, John H. "Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact?" In *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli, 11–23. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Esquivel, Savannah. "Unsettling the Spiritual Conquest: The Murals of the Huaquechula Monastery in Sixteenth Century Mexico." PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2020.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Farago, Claire, ed. *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America, 1450–1650*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995.

- Faria, Francisco Leite de. "João António Cavazzi: a sua obra e a sua vida." In Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi, *Descrição histórica dos três reinos do Congo, Matamba e Angola*, 1:xi–lviii. Trans. Graciano Maria de Leguzzano. 2 vols. Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1965.
- Findlen, Paula. *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Fraiman, Susan. "Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry* 21.4 (1995): 805–21.
- Fromont, Cécile. "Collecting and Translating Knowledge across Cultures: Capuchin Missionary Images of Early Modern Central Africa." In *Collecting across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. Daniela Bleichmar and Peter Mancall, 134–54, 311–15. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011a.
- Fromont, Cécile. "Under the Sign of the Cross in the Kingdom of Kongo: Religious Conversion and Visual Correlation in Early Modern Central Africa." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 59–60 (2011b): 109–23.
- Fromont, Cécile. *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo*. Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
- Fromont, Cécile. "Common Threads: Cloth, Colour, and the Slave Trade in Early Modern Kongo and Angola." *Art History* 41.5 (2018): 838–67.
- Fromont, Cécile. "The Taste of Others: Finery, the Slave Trade, and Africa's Place in the Traffic in Early Modern Things." In *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500–1800*, ed. Paula Findlen, 273–92. Abingdon: Routledge, 2021.
- Fromont, Cécile. *Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2022a.
- Fromont, Cécile. "Nature, Culture, and Faith in Seventeenth-Century Kongo and Angola: The Parma Watercolors Texts." *MAVCOR Journal* 6.1 (2022b).
- Gage, Frances. "Exercise for Mind and Body: Giulio Mancini, Collecting, and the Beholding of Landscape Painting in the Seventeenth Century." *Renaissance Quarterly* 61.4 (2008): 1167–207.
- Gage, Frances. *Painting as Medicine in Early Modern Rome: Giulio Mancini and the Efficacy of Art*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2016.
- Gaudio, Michael. "Savage Marks: Engraving and Empire in Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and True Report*." In *Art and the British Empire*, ed. Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham, 269–87. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Gaudio, Michael. *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Giovanni Belotti da Romano. "Avvertimenti Salutevoli agli Apostolici Missionari, Specialmente Ne Regni del Congo, Angola, e circonvicini Espressi da F. Gio: Belotti da Romano Pred.e Capuc.o della prov.a di Brescia Già Miss.o Apos.o ne sudetti Regni." Biblioteca del Clero, Bergamo, MS 45. 1680.
- Greenblatt, Stephen Jay. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Gruzinski, Serge. *La colonisation de l'imaginaire: Sociétés indigènes et occidentalisation dans le Mexique espagnol, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1988.

- Gruzinski, Serge. *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to "Blade Runner" (1492–2019)*. Ed. Heather MacLean. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Guerrero Mosquera, Andrea. "Bolsas Mandingas en Cartagena de Indias durante el siglo XVII." *Memorias: Revista Digital de Historia e Arqueología desde el Caribe Colombiano* 43 (2020): 69–93.
- Hall, Kim F. *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Hamann, Byron Ellsworth. "The Mirrors of *Las Meninas*: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay." *Art Bulletin* 92.1–2 (2010): 6–35.
- Heintze, Beatrix. "Unbekanntes Angola: Der Staat Ndongo im 16. Jahrhundert." *Anthropos* 72.5–6 (1977): 749–805.
- Heintze, Beatrix. *Fontes para a história de Angola do século xvii*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985.
- Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797*. London: Methuen, 1986.
- Hulton, P. H. *The American Drawings of John White, 1577–1590, with Drawings of European and Oriental Subjects*. Ed. David B. Quinn, John White, and P. H. Hulton. London: Trustees of the British Museum; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964.
- Impey, Oliver, and Arthur MacGregor, eds. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Jarry, Madeleine. "L'exotisme au temps de Louis XIV: tapisseries des Gobelins et de Beauvais." *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 11.1–2 (1976): 52–71.
- Johnson, Jessica Marie. *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.
- Jones, Nicholas R. *Staging Habla De Negros: Radical Performances of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2019.
- Jones, Pamela M. "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600." *The Art Bulletin* 70.2 (1988): 261–72.
- Koerner, Joseph Leo. "Hieronymus Bosch's World Picture." In *Picturing Science / Producing Art*, ed. Peter Galison and Caroline Jones, 297–323. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Kotani, Noriko. "Studies in Jesuit Art in Japan." PhD diss., Princeton University, 2010.
- Kriz, Kay Dian. *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Kubler, George. "On the Colonial Extinction of the Motifs of Pre-Columbian Art." In *Studies in Ancient American and European Art*, ed. Thomas Reese, 66–74. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Leibsohn, Dana. *Script and Glyph: Pre-Hispanic History, Colonial Bookmaking and the Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2009.
- Levenson, Jay A. *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*. Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1991.
- Levenson, Jay A., Diogo Ramada Curto, and Jack Turner. *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries*. Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2007.

- López Austin, Alfredo. "The Research Method of Fray Bernardino De Sahagún: The Questionnaires." In *Sixteenth-Century Mexico: The Work of Sahagún*, ed. Munro Edmonson, 111–49. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974.
- Magaloni Kerpel, Diana. "Visualizing the Nahuatl/Christian Dialogue: Images of the Conquest in Sahagún's Florentine Codex and Their Sources." In *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Fr. Bernardino De Sahagún*, ed. John F. Schwaller, 193–221. Berkeley, CA: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2003.
- Markey, Lia. "'Istoria della terra chiamata la Nuova Spagna': The History and Reception of Sahagún's Codex at the Medici Court." In *Colors between Two Worlds: The Florentine Codex of Bernardino De Sahagún*, ed. Gerhard Wolf, Joseph Connors, and Louis A. Waldman, 199–220. Florence: Villa I Tatti, 2008.
- Markey, Lia. "Stradano's Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence." *Renaissance Quarterly* 65.2 (2012): 385–442.
- Markey, Lia. *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2016.
- Martinez, Pietro, and Giovanni d'Atienza. *Raguaglio d'alcune missioni dell'Indie Orientali, et Occidentali*. Naples: Gio. Iacomo Carlino & Antonio Pace, 1593.
- Merrell, James H. "Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians." *William and Mary Quarterly* 46.1 (1989): 94–119.
- Molineux, Catherine. *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Morales, Francisco. "Dos figuras en la utopía franciscana de Nueva España: fray Juan de Zumárraga y fray Martín de Valencia." *Caravelle* 76–77 (2001): 333–44.
- Norton, Marcy. "Subaltern Technologies and Early Modernity in the Atlantic World." *Colonial Latin American Review* 26.1 (2017): 18–38.
- Ortega Sánchez, Delfín. *La pedagogía de la evangelización franciscana en el virreinato de Nueva España (Siglo XVI)*. Zaragoza: Libros Pórtico, 2013.
- Parma Watercolors*. Virgili Collection, Parma. Ca. 1663–90.
- Peterson, Jeanette Favrot, and Kevin Terraciano. *The Florentine Codex: An Encyclopedia of the Nahuatl World in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*. Ed. Jeanette Favrot Peterson and Kevin Terraciano. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019.
- Phipps, Elena, Johanna Hecht, Cristina Esteras Martín, and Luisa Elena Alcalá. *The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530–1830*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.
- Pistoni, Giuseppe. *Fra Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi Da Montecuccolo: Documenti Inediti*. Modena: TEIC, 1972.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* (1991): 33–40.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Rama, Angel. *The Lettered City: Latin America in Translation / En Traducción / Em Tradução*. Ed. and trans. John Charles Chasteen. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Rappaport, Joanne, and Thomas B. F. Cummins. *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.

- Rubiés, Joan-Pau. "Travel Writing and Humanistic Culture: A Blunted Impact?" *Journal of Early Modern History* 10.1 (2006): 131–68.
- Russo, Alessandra. *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500–1600*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014.
- Sahagún, Bernardino de. *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, MS Mediceo Palatino 218, 219, 220. 1577.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 2012.
- Sartor, Mario. *Ars dicendi et excudendi, Diego Valadés incisore messicano in Italia*. Padova: Cleup, 1992.
- Schmidt, Benjamin. *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- Shaffer, Holy. *Grafted Arts: Art Making and Taking in the Struggle for Western India, 1760–1820*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022.
- Singh, Kavita. *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2017.
- Spicer, Joaneath A. *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe*. Baltimore, MD: Walters Art Museum, 2012.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985): 243–61.
- Thornton, John Kelly. *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641–1718*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- Thornton, John Kelly. "Afro-Christian Syncretism in the Kingdom of Kongo." *Journal of African History* 54.1 (2013): 53–77.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *La conquête de l'Amérique: La question de l'autre*. Paris: Seuil, 1982.
- Umberger, Emily Good, and Tom Cummins, eds. *Native Artists and Patrons in Colonial Latin America*. Tempe: Arizona State University, 1995.
- Valadés, Diego. *Rhetorica christiana ad concionandi et orandi usum accommodata, vtriusque facultatis exemplis suo loco insertis quae quidem ex Indorum maximè deprompta sunt historiis. Vnde praeter doctrinam, sum[m]a quoque delectatio comparabitur. Avctore Rdo admodum P. F. Didaco Valades*. Perugia: Pietro Giacomo Petrucci, 1579.
- Vázquez Janeiro, Isaac. "Fray Diego Valadés. Nueva aproximación a su biografía." *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 48 (1988): 847–56.
- Vocabularium Latinum, Hispanicum et Congense*. Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio-Emmanuele II di Roma, MS Varia 274, Fondi minori 1896. 1651.
- Wang, Cheng-hua. "A Global Perspective on Eighteenth-Century Chinese Art and Visual Culture." *Art Bulletin* 96.4 (2014): 379–94.
- Whitehead, Peter James Palmer, and M. Boeseman. *A Portrait of Dutch 17th Century Brazil: Animals, Plants, and People by the Artists of Johan Maurits of Nassau*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1989.