

Quimbandas:

EXPLORATIONS OF IDENTITIES

ISSN 2688-5158

Volume 1 Number 1

BELLE DACOSTA GREENE

*ref. de gratias
est successu. Yours,
Belle Costa Greene*

DECEMBER 2020



ÉcritureSTL

PRESIDENT

Nicole Dugger, *Maryville University*

VICE-PRESIDENT

Karrousel White, *The White Group*

GENERAL SECRETARY

Tarrell R. Campbell, *Saint Louis University*

ÉcritureSTL is a non-profit 501 c 3 organization dedicated to furthering the literary arts in Saint Louis, Missouri. Moreover, we are writers, educators, scholars, and communitarians who believe in the power of individual creativity to connect people. We work to build strong communities and to develop the literary arts by fostering meaningful writing and storytelling experiences and purposively generative uses of life's realities.

*Cover: By permission of Labancamy Entertainment and Productions, LLC. Belle in Her Own Hand.
Artist: Aaron West*

Quimbandas

Explorations of Identities

December 2020

Vol. 1, No. 1

published by
Labancamy Publishing

for
ÉcritureSTL



Quimbandas

EDITOR
Tarrell R. Campbell

REVIEW EDITORS

Book Review Editor—Alex Wulff, *Maryville University*

Podcast Review Editor—Nicole Dugger, *Maryville University*

Art Review Editor—Olubukola Gbadegesin, *Saint Louis University*

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Suzanne Akbari, *University of Toronto*

Ron Austin, *Washington University in Saint Louis*

Vincent Barletta, *Stanford University*

Leamon Bazil, *Sam Houston State University*

Ruth Evans, *Saint Louis University*

Jameca Falconer, *Emergence Psychological Services*

Edward Holt, *Grambling State University*

Anthony Kaldellis, *The Ohio State University*

Paul Kaplan, *Purchase College, SUNY*

Christopher Livanos, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Howard Rambsy II, *Southern Illinois University Edwardsville*

T.K. Smith, *Saint Louis University*

Teron Sutherlin, *The Overlake School*

Shaun Tougher, *Cardiff University*

Miguel Valerio, *Washington University in Saint Louis*

Alex Wulff, *Maryville University*

Justin Yancey, *Varsity Tutors*

Quimbandas: Explorations of Identities is an interdisciplinary, fully refereed, online journal dedicated to publishing the finest scholarship related to the explorations of human identities, and human development issues—particularly as relates constructions and representations of African diasporic identities. *Quimbandas* invites the submission of original manuscripts on a full range of topics related to approaches to human identities and human development issues.

Quimbandas seeks to help transform our collective understandings of the delimiting categories of the human—specifically the feminine and the masculine—and to expose the consequences associated with parceling off aspects of our humanity in the furtherance of promoting normative social mores that may prove impediments to transcendence of the current condition. Underscored by conceptual understandings of the malungos—those same-type companions of the ship's hull whose allegiance and dedication to one another cut across lineage—the Journal fosters understandings of human beings and the identities that they promote. Working to eliminate, for example, the distinctions between that considered masculine and that considered feminine, *Quimbandas* seeks to promote the fullest of potentialities that could only be recognized as human.

The seventeenth-century image of the *quimbandas*. Image from the estate of Manoscritti Araldi di Padre Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi. Reproduced with the kind permission of Sr. M. Araldi. [Source: Bharat Mehra et al., published by De Gruyter. 2019. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Public License]

Quimbandas: Explorations of Identities (ISSN 2688-5158 (print); 2688-5166 (online)) is published quarterly, in March, June, August, and December, by Labancamy Publishing for ÉcritureSTL, 1630 Knapp Street, Saint Louis, Missouri 63106.

Copyright © 2020 by ÉcritureSTL, Saint Louis, Missouri

Contents

ARTICLES

- 12 Born of Two Races: Embodying the Border in the Greek Proto-Romance *Digenes Akrites*
• Amanda Barton
- 19 On Absences: The Erasure of Black Women in the *Cantigas de Santa María* (*Biblioteca de El Escorial MS T.I.1 and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze B.R.20*)
• Eileen McKiernan González
- 43 Belle da Costa Greene, Book History, Race, and Medieval Studies
• Dorothy Kim

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

- 62 Joan of Arc: The Most Powerful Woman of the Middle Ages
• Sarah Jaworski
- 62 Dark Night of the Soul
• Rebecca Witte
- 62 St. Thomas Becket: The King's Man
• Chris Kennebeck

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ARTISTS

- 63 Trojan Women
• Daniel Ising
- 77 Storyteller
- 80 The Collector
- 80 Small Game
• Rachel Adams

BARS AND LYRICS

- 81 The Ballad of Belle da Costa Greene
• Big Piph

REVIEWS

Book Review

- 83 *Virgin Whore* by Emma Solberg
• Tarrell R. Campbell

Art Review

- 85 *Mutualities* by Cauleen Smith
• TK Smith

Podcast Review

- 89 *Tea with Queen and J*
• Nicole Dugger

Call-for-Paper: Forthcoming Issue

- 91 “*Stag Shot Billy!*”

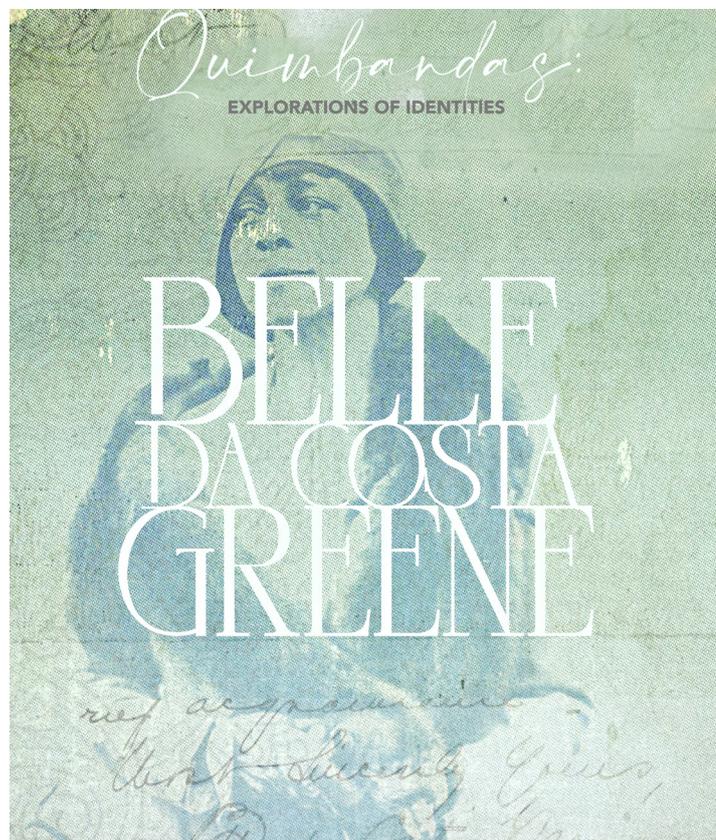
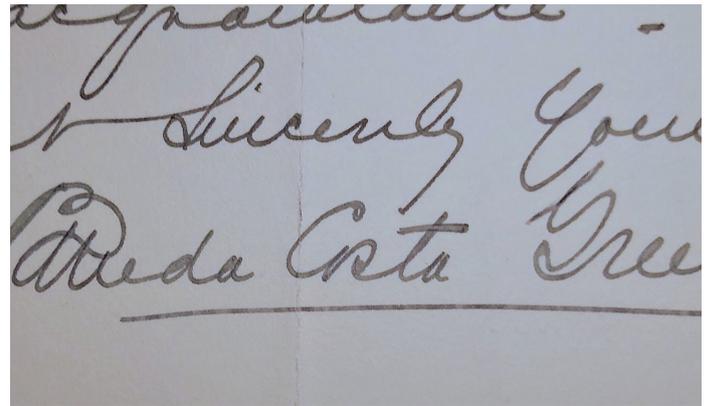


About the Cover

Belle da Costa Greene
(Library of Congress, Washington,
D.C.; neg. no. LC USZ 62 93225)



Thank you note, signature Belle da Costa Greene
(L.F. Davis/ Grolier Club)



Quimbandas, Vol. 1, No. 1, cover
(Labancamy/A. West)

The cover art is an original composite visual image designed by graphic design artist Aaron West. It consists, primarily, of a black and white photograph of Belle da Costa Greene held by the Library of Congress with an overlay of script in Greene's own hand. In preparation for the 2018 scholarly conference, *Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field*, I had the pleasure of meeting Lisa Fagin Davis—Executive Director of the Medieval Academy of America. While researching for a lecture, Davis discovered a note, written in Belle's own hand. Davis writes:

:)

I was at the Grolier Club in NYC last week doing some research for a lecture I'm giving there next month, and found the attached, a 1915 thank-you note from Belle to dealer Wilfrid Voynich, in silver ink. So elegant!

Lisa

Quimbandas: Explorations of Identities is greatly appreciative of Lisa Fagin Davis and Aaron West for their contributions to Volume 1, Number 1: "Celebrating the Lives and Times of Belle da Costa Greene."

TRC
8 December 2020

Notes from the Editor



Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field
 Pictured from left to right, top row: Shavauna Munster, Rob Barnett, Byron Gilman-Hernandez, Natalie Whittaker, RD Perry, Philip Zombrowski, Jacqueline Lombard, Tarrell R. Campbell.
 Bottom row: Anthony Hasler, Ruth Evans, Seeta Chaganti, Jonathan Hsy, Shayma Rajendran, Christi Whiskey, Dorothy Kim, Monica Green.

By the late-spring of 2018, I had just completed an extensive study of representations of black masculinities as relates nineteenth-century and twentieth-century American literatures. The study included analyses of the *lumpenproletariat* as captured in African American folkloric traditions. The *lumpenproletariat*, or ragged proletariat, is a restless, border-crossing, wandering, migratory, transgressive figure—often picaresque and carnivalesque in characterization and description. Interestingly, Richard T. Greener found his way into my research. Greener was a prominent American educator and the first African American to graduate from Harvard College. Still, due to a number of nineteenth-century intersecting political, racial, sectional, and economic reasons, Greener lived a hobo-ish, migratory type of existence and, . . . so. Just the same, by the late-fall of 2018: I found myself working to organize a scholarly conference dedicated to Greener’s daughter, Belle, and to those scholars whose academic interests and specialties intersected with the fields represented by Belle’s lives and times.

The original scholarship, essays, short stories, poems, performances, and reviews contained in volume 1, number 1 of *Quimbandas: Explorations of Identities* capture the themes, arguments, subject-matters, and tones of Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field, a scholarly conference held on the campus of Saint Louis University at the Center for Global Citizenship 30 November–2 December 2018. Belle da Costa Greene was a prominent art historian and the first manuscript librarian of the Pierpont Morgan collection. She was also the first known person of color, and second woman, to be elected a Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America (1939). According to the Morgan Library and Museum website, “Morgan . . . hired Greene, a librarian from Princeton University, to manage and augment his collections. . . . Although she would work with Morgan for only seven years before his death in 1913, Greene transformed Morgan’s collection and quickly became a leading figure in the rare book world. For example, in 1908—during her first trip to Europe—

she famously orchestrated a secret pre-sale deal to secure a group of coveted volumes printed by William Caxton.” Her legacy highlights the professional difficulties faced by Medievalists of Color, the personal sacrifices they make in order to belong to the field, and their extraordinary contributions to Medieval Studies. For, although Greene was the daughter of Richard T. Greener, in order to gain entrance and acceptance into the racially fraught professional landscape of early twentieth-century New York: she had to pass as white.

The major thrust of *Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field* centered on the contemporary state of Medieval Studies, within and without the Academy. Understanding the field to be at a crossroads as regards certain aspects of diversity, the conference sought to address the relative lack of inclusivity experienced by scholars of color and to highlight the roles of Belle da Costa Greene in shaping aspects of Medieval Studies and manuscript production and archival. The central question: Will Medieval Studies remain an open, safe, and inclusive environment—reflective of its *always, already* integrated histories—or, will the present atmosphere of isolated thinking, white supremacy, and delimited academic freedom continue to reign? In accordance with those who seek the light, *Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field* celebrated the lives and accomplishments of Belle da Costa Greene and worked to contribute to the developing fields of scholarship centered on the meanings of the “medieval” and “Middle Ages” as relates increasingly interdisciplinary and cross-regional conceptions of the premodern world. More specifically, *Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field* was an opportunity to focus on those aspects of the “medieval” and “Middle Ages” specifically of interest to medievalists of color and in alignment with the lives of Greene.

T.R Campbell
6 DEC 2020

Poster, Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field
(Labancamy/A. West)



Born of Two Races: Embodying the Border in the Greek Proto-Romance *Digenes Akrites*

By Amanda Barton

Abstract: The Greek poem *Digenes Akrites* (Διγενῆς Ἀκρίτης) narrates the superhuman exploits of the Byzantine hero Basil Digenes Akrites. As the son of an Arab Emir and a Byzantine noblewoman, Basil stands out as a heroic, biracial character. In the context of recent efforts to recover marginalized stories from the medieval period within a global context, a biracial character as the hero of an epic length, narrative poem demands some attention. *Digenes Akrites* allows us to consider Christian representations of Muslims and the Middle East, the symbolic weight of biracial characters in literature, and it also can be used to enrich our approach to the global Middle Ages. In this essay, I do not hope to offer an in-depth analysis of the poem, but instead, I would like to present it as a potential text of interest for teaching or further research that deserves attention outside of Byzantine studies.

Songs of the medieval Greek hero Basil Digenes Akrites tell many feats of supernatural strength and heroism. As a young boy, while hunting with his father and uncle, he kills two bears with his bare hands, runs swiftly enough to catch a hind and tear it in two, and finally faces a lion one-on-one (Ins. 1080-1170).¹ Once he is grown, he faces improbable numbers of bandits, overcomes many opponents in feats of strength, and even slays a dragon (Ins. 2508-2538). These feats, wondrous as they are, are not incredibly unique literary events. Many heroes from epic and romance have fought and killed ferocious wild animals with their bare hands—such as the Hellenic Greek hero Herakles and the Nemean lion—or slain dragons—such as the hero of the Old English epic *Beowulf*.² These types of superhuman feats, while flashy, are not in and of themselves unique in literary history. What stands out about Basil to the modern critic is his heritage. The son of an Arab Emir and a Byzantine noblewoman, Basil is a biracial character, and more importantly he is a heroic character. As more academic work has consciously and explicitly engaged with race in medieval literature, efforts to engage with *Digenes Akrites*, or other Akritic literatures, are from this perspective still lacking. It seems timely to address this omission.

However, I would like to add a confession here before I con-

Amanda Barton's research focuses on the places where literature and culture meet the human body. Her recent projects examine pain in late medieval English literature and are informed by the history of medicine, disability studies, gender and sexuality studies, and critical race theory. She holds a PhD in English with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies from Saint Louis University, where she currently teaches English, ESL, and Women's and Gender Studies.

¹All references to *Digenes Akrites* are from John Mavrogordato, *Digenes Akrites* (Oxford, 1956). All quotations from the poem are given in Mavrogordato's English translation. I follow Mavrogordato's transliteration of the Greek names throughout the essay.

²For the episode of Herakles and the Nemean lion see Sir James Frazer's edition of *The Library of Apollodorus* (Harvard University Press, 1921) on the Perseus Digital Library (original Greek: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0548.tlg001.perseus-grc1:2.5.1>; English translation: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0548.tlg001.perseus-eng1:2.5.1>).

tinue further: I am not a Byzantinist. By discussing a Greek poem in this essay, I recognize that I am stepping outside of my area of expertise. I encountered the poem *Digenes Akrites* myself by a happy chance years ago through the recommendation of Peter Milich. The poem seems to be rather obscure outside of Byzantine studies. Even within Byzantine studies, it is not often discussed (Livanos 125). The fact that the main character is biracial demands attention because representations of biracial characters are seemingly rare in literature of this period. In fact, at this point in my career, I have not encountered any other positive or heroic representations of biracial characters within Christian literature from the medieval period. I do not mean to argue that none exist, but rather that their perceived absences make me wonder why they are missing. Have they simply been overlooked? Or, are they truly absent? Other recent work on race in the Middle Ages, such as Geraldine Heng's work, have centered the stories of Jewish and Muslim characters in Christian European literature from this period.³ At the same time, projects such as *The Global Middle Ages Project* have actively de-centered Europe and explored the exchange between different parts of the world between 500 and 1500 CE. In the context of recent efforts to recover marginalized stories from this period within a global context, a biracial character as the hero of an epic length, narrative poem demands some attention. *Digenes Akrites* and the related Akritic songs allow us to consider Christian representations of Muslims and the Middle East and the symbolic weight of biracial characters in literature; they also can be used to enrich approaches to the global Middle Ages. In this essay, I present *Digenes Akrites* as a potential text of interest that deserves attention outside of Byzantine studies.

About the Poem

Digenes Akrites (Greek: Διγενής Ἀκρίτης) is a Demotic Greek poem of between 3,000 and 4,000 lines. It narrates and celebrates the parentage, exploits, and death of its eponymous hero, Basileous Digenes Akrites. The poem is divided into two parts, usually called "The Lay of the Emir" and "The Digeneid." The Lay of the Emir comprises the first eight books of the poem and focuses on Basil's parents leading up to Basil's birth. The Digeneid comprises the final five books and tells of Basil's heroic, superhuman feats as a warrior frontiersman on the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire, up until his death. I have seen several translations of Basil's epithet, Digenes Akrites, that attempt to keep it as two words in English, which becomes very unwieldy. For example, "two-blooded" or "twyborn" for *digenes* and "borderer" and "frontiersman" for *akrites*.⁴ An interesting project might be to examine the translation history of Basil's name, especially informed by more recent work on race in medieval Europe. One translation that has been used—one that may be more appropriate for contemporary English speakers—might be Christopher Livanos's translation "born of two races" (125). *Akrites*, as with other titles or offices from the Byzantine Empire, does not have a satisfactory one-word translation into Modern English. Perhaps Modern English lacks the appropriate word because we do not have as many frontiers, instead only international borders. Marcher might work for those of us who study England in the Middle Ages, but it does not carry the same clarity.

Akritai were standing army units along the Eastern borders of the Empire in the ninth and tenth century. In the locations in which they were stationed, they faced the Muslim states of the Middle East and they were tasked with guarding the border of the Empire ("Akritai"). As the grandson of a general from a noble family, Basil is more than just a common foot soldier. I would argue his noble

³See Heng *Empire of Magic* (Columbia University Press, 2003) for more on Jewish and Muslim representations in European romance. For a deeper analysis of race, see Heng *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁴ Elizabeth Jeffries translates *digenes akrites* as "The Frontiersman of Double Descent," John Mavrogordato translates it as "Twyborn Borderer," and Denison Hull uses "The Two-Blooded Border Lord."

lineage, on both sides of his family, is an important part of his identity as an akrites and follows other common tropes around nobility that we see in medieval literature. More appropriate analogs might be both the noble knight of European literary tradition and the lawless cowboy of twentieth-century American tradition; Basil's character combines elements of the nobility and elevated birth of the knights errant from romance traditions with the lawless cowboy who becomes popular in the American westerns of the twentieth century.

Much like the popularity of both the cowboy in the American western and the knight errant in romances in their respective traditions, the stories of *Digenes Akrites* were popular throughout the Greek speaking Middle Ages. At least six manuscripts have been found containing the poem, and one of these is an incomplete Russian version. The two oldest manuscripts are the *Escorial* (Madrid, 1867 lines) and the *Grottaferata* (Rome, 3749 lines), which share a common core narrative that likely dates back to the twelfth century. Most modern editions are based on the longer *Grottaferata* with reference to the *Escorial*. The Akritic songs referred to earlier are a genre of medieval Greek poetry that deal with the heroic deeds of the *akritai*. *Digenes Akrites* is considered the most notable example, and it is certainly the longest. It has been argued that the longer poem is an attempt to “form a single cohesive story out of loosely connected songs about a hero who may have lived in the ninth century, during the reign of Basil I” (Livanos 125). When these songs were first uncovered and published in the middle of the nineteenth century, they were referred to as a “Greek Medieval Popular Epic” (Mavogrodata xi). Following these discoveries, the first *Digenes Akrites* manuscript was discovered and subsequently published in 1875.

Within this history of discovery and publication, the poem was first received as an epic, and, as is perhaps fitting to the period of romantic nationalism, some early critics placed it in the category of national epics. For example, in 1911, J. B. Bury praised its “comprehensiveness. . . which justifies us in naming it along with Homer and the *Nibelungenlied*” (18-19). The idea of the national epic was one created in nineteenth-century Europe and is absolutely not medieval, although the idea persists in certain, non-scholarly circles. The practice, both historic and contemporary, of selectively claiming pieces of pre-nineteenth century literature for nationalist causes and philosophies continues to be scrutinized,⁵ and these attempts to categorize *Digenes Akrites* as a national epic should be considered as part of its historical reception, not an essential character of the poem. Indicative of its continuing perception as worthy of this categorization, and perhaps more alarmingly, the continuing popularity of the idea of national epics, the *Wikipedia* page for “National Epic” lists *Digenes Akrites* for Byzantine Greece, alongside the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey* for Ancient Greece. While a *Wikipedia* listing does not indicate current scholarly consensus, and even the idea of the national epic has been acknowledged to be problematic with a troubling history, *Wikipedia* does give an important indication of current popular perception. Fernanda Moore has artfully analyzed why attempts to claim *Digenes Akrites* for Greece were never quite as successful as French claims on *La Chanson de Roland*, as one example. Whether or not the poem is an *epic*, according to the characteristics of literary genre, continues to be debated, but the poem also shows strong characteristics of romance stories, primarily based on its content. As Lillian Hornstein wrote in 1971, “all definitions [of romance] that attempt categorization by content, in particular, are destined for frustration, as ‘there will emerge only hazy borderlines where epic, saga, *chanson de geste*, romance, historical romance, lai, saint’s life, pious legend, fabliau meet and blend” (Hornstein 69). For these reasons, the poem has been categorized as either a “proto-romance” or an “epic romance.”

⁵For a brief overview of right-wing nationalist uses of the Middle Ages, see Andrew B. R. Elliott, “A Vile Love Affair: Right Wing Nationalism and the Middle Ages,” on *The Public Medievalist*, edited by Paul B. Sturtevant, 14 Feb. 2017. <https://www.publicmedievalist.com/vile-love-affair/>

Perhaps more important than the generic category of the poem is the historical context of the poem. The poem and the related songs are more popular sources for historians than for literary critics. As Livanos has argued, the poems and songs have been “mined for historical information” more often than they have been studied on their literary merits (Livanos 125). While *Digenes Akrites* itself was likely written in the twelfth century, the poems are likely set during the historical period of the ninth and tenth centuries, during the Arab-Byzantine wars in Asia Minor. Digenes Akrites’s given name, Basil, especially calls to mind Basil I, who reigned in the ninth century, and Basil II, who ruled from 976-1025. Basil II was known as a great military leader, and at the end of his reign, the borders of the Empire stretched from the Danube to the Euphrates. Basil II is best remembered for his conquest of Bulgaria, but he was also responsible for the Christianization of the Kievan Rus. He married his sister, Anna Porphyrogenita, to Vladimir I of Kiev in exchange for military support. After Basil’s death in 1025, the Eastern Border began to shrink back, and by the First Crusade at the end of the eleventh century, the Empire barely held the shores of the Anatolian peninsula, along the Bosphorus and the Aegean sea. Basil II is likely an important figure to keep in mind when reading *Digenes Akrites*, because not only is our hero named Basil, but the Emperor in the poem is also named Basil (ln. 2052). By the time that *Digenes Akrites* was compiled, the Empire would have completely lost Cappadocia and the rest of Anatolia, which is the primary setting for the poem’s action. This choice of setting supports readings that this poem is heavily nostalgic.

It is my belief that *Digenes Akrites* can be useful to the non-Byzantinist as a primary source for several reasons, but most especially excerpts from it could be useful and interesting for teaching the literature or history of the period. The remainder of the essay focuses on some of the literary parallels and corollaries, with a specific focus on the first part of the poem, “The Lay of the Emir.”

Lay of the Emir

The first section of poem tells the story of an Arab emir’s raid across the Byzantine border, during which he carries off the daughter of a Byzantine general. Her brothers are sent to recover her and, in the process, the emir decides to convert to Christianity in order to marry the general’s daughter. He then converts his household to Christianity and, together, he and his wife have a son. Importantly, Basil’s father does not leave the narrative after his birth. The poem recounts Basil as a child hunting with his father and his superhuman exploits even then.

This section holds some important corollaries with representations of Muslims in European romances. First, we have the Muslim man—usually a king or knight, and often the European title is used—who desires a Christian woman—usually a princess, but in this case a noble woman. Second, we have the man converting to Christianity to marry her. Third, I would argue that the emir here is at least a parallel to the “Saracen knights” of European romances. These three tropes are most commonly seen in the “Constance group” of medieval romances. These include Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Man of Law’s Tale*, Gower’s Second Exemplan in *Confessio Amantis*, Nicholas Trevet’s account in his Anglo-Norman *Chronicles*, and the Middle English romances *Emare* and *The King of Tars*. Geraldine Heng has done an excellent job of analyzing this group in *Empire of Magic*, and she also includes *Florence de Rome* from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, the second tale on the fifth day. What is key in this group is that the marriage is never happy. Usually that man’s family rejects his Christian bride and they work to end the marriage, especially the women of his family. This marriage also almost never results in the birth of a child, and if it does, the child is a monster, as in the Middle English *The King of Tars* (lns. 574-582). The experiences of the characters in *Digenes Akrites* are strikingly different. That is not to say that the poem is a utopia of perfect, unproblematic multiculturalism. For example, the description of the Emir follows the standard representation of the noble

Saracen knight in European romances: he is not marked by physical difference.

The poem describes the Emir's physical characteristics in an early section where he is equally praised:

Was an Emir of breed, exceeding rich,
 Of wisdom seized and bravery to the top,
 Not black as Aethiops are, but fair and lovely,
 Already bloomed with comely curly beard.
 He had a well-grown and rather matted brow;
 His quick and pleasant gaze and full of love
 Shone like a rose from out his countenance.
 The beauty of a cypress was his stature,
 That any saw him to be like a picture;
 With this he held unconquerable strength;
 And every day he pleased to war with beasts (lns. 30-40)

There are echoes of this description when young Basil is described in Book Four:

Indeed the young man had a comely stature,
 and fair hair, curling a little, and large eyes,
 A white and rosy face, a brow all black,
 His breast like crystal was a fathom broad. (lns. 1176-1179)

These representations are striking because they fit so neatly into the tradition that Geraldine Heng and others have identified of Saracen knights who are indistinguishable from Christian knights in other European representation. Many of those portrayals refer specifically to behavior, but in the case of the Emir, he is not marked physiologically as other. His skin is not dark—"not as black as the Aethiops"—but fair and lovely. His son, especially, does not seem to be physically marked by his father's race. He is described as having "fair hair" and a "white and rosy face." The poem here seems to go out of its way to note that his skin is not dark but rosy white.

Despite the problematic representation of the Emir, other aspects of his story offer a striking contrast to the Constance group. In a beautiful scene after the Emir's conversation, he speaks to his mother and converts her to Christianity. By contrast, the mother of the Sultan in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale* begins plotting against her son's marriage almost immediately: "The mooder of the Sowdan, welle of vices, / Espied hath hir sones pleyn entente, / How he wol lete his olde sacrifices; And right anon she for his conseil sente" (lns. 323-326). After meeting with her councilors, she hosts a feast for Custance and her entourage as a pretense to have them killed: "The Sowdan and the Cristen everichone / Been al tohewe and stiked at the bord, / But it were oonly dame Custance allone" (lns. 429-431). Chaucer uses language to describe the Sultan's mother that calls to mind demonic or witch-like characteristics, such as "welle of vices" (ln. 323), "roote of iniquitee" (ln. 358), and "cursed krone" (ln. 432). Her part in the murder of her own son increases her wickedness and monstrosity. The story is much different in *Digenes Akrites*. None of the jealousy and poison attributed to the Muslim women in the Constance group is present in the moment the Emir's mother converts to Christianity. In some ways it is kind of trite:

. . . his mother, who
 Did not refuse her son's excellent counsel,
 But like good earth, having received the seed,
 Straightway she brought forth fruit, speaking these words:
 'Child, I believe through you on God in Trinity,
 With you I will journey well to Romania
 Baptized for remission of my many faults,
 And grateful to have had the light through you.'
 Likewise the kinsmen also who were there
 And others who had come with her a crowd
 All with one voice cried out confessing Christ (lms. 860-880)

The Emir is easily able to convert his household, such is the power of the Christian faith, and he moves with his wife and his family—and presumably his military forces—into Byzantine territory.

While there is not a clear representation of physical difference in these characters, and the Emir must still reject his own religion, the joining of the families is an ultimately joyous occasion within the poem. As stated before, the birth of a son from the union does not result in something monstrous, as happens in *The King of Tars*. Perhaps the key take away from Basil Digenes Akrites' characterization is that he is Byzantine through and through—even if he is a bit wild. It would be irresponsible to move on without acknowledging the troubling aspects of Basil's representation. As noted before, Heng has established that the figure of the noble Saracen reinforces the standard European, Christian ideas of what a noble knight looks like, rather than offering true diversity to the representation or, more troublingly, figuring the Muslim knight as dark, different and monstrous (*Empire of Magic* 230). The character of Basil functions in similar ways; after his father's conversion to Christianity, any cultural or religious characteristics of behavior that could be recognized as Arab or Muslim simply fall away. The Emir is completely assimilated, and therefore so is Basil. Basil Digenes Akrites is culturally Christian and Greek, and even when he rocks the boat, he manages to reinforce the status quo. In keeping with this assimilation, Basil is not figured as monstrous, but instead heroic. Therefore, the character is not a way to reclaim some sort of narrative of biracial experience in medieval Anatolia. If anything, it destroys difference in a region that is historically incredibly diverse. But it does offer an example of how medieval writers wrote biracial characters and what they might represent in a world that we have come to recognize as broadly, globally interconnected.

Works Cited

- "Akritai." *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Edited by Alexander P. Kazhdan, et al. Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 1991.
 Bury, J. B. *Romances of Chivalry on Greek Soil*. Clarendon Press, 1911.
 Chandler, John H, editor. *The King of Tars*. TEAMS Middle English Texts Series. 2015.

⁶Romania here refers to Byzantine territories, as the Eastern Roman Empire and the place where the "Romans" lived.

- <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/chandler-the-king-of-tars>
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Man of Law's Tale. The Riverside Chaucer*. Edited by Larry D. Benson. Houghton Mifflin, 1987. pp. 87-104.
- Elliott, Andrew B. R. "A Vile Love Affair: Right Wing Nationalism and the Middle Ages." *The Public Medievalist*, edited by Paul B. Sturtevant, 14 Feb. 2017. <https://www.publicmedievalist.com/vile-love-affair/>.
- The Global Middle Ages Project*. <http://globalmiddleages.org/>
- Heng, Geraldine. *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*. Columbia University Press, 2003.
- . *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Hornstein, Lillian H. "Middle English Romances." *Recent Middle English Scholarship and Criticism: Survey and Desiderata*. Edited by J. Burke Severs. Duquesne University Press, 1971. pp. 55-96.
- Hull, Denison B, translator. *Digenis Akritas: The Two-Blooded Border Lord. The Grottaferrata Version*. Ohio University Press, 1972.
- Jeffreys, Elizabeth, editor and translator. *Digenis Akritis: the Grottaferrata and Escorial Versions*. Cambridge University Press, 1998
- Livanos, Christopher. "A Case Study in Dragon-Slaying: Digenes and the Serpent." *Center for Oral Tradition*. Vol. 26, no. 1, 2011, pp. 125-144.
- Mavrogordato, John, translator and editor. *Digenes Akrites*. Oxford, 1956.
- Moore, Fernanda. "How to Build a National Epic: Digenes Akrites and the Song of Roland." *Classica and National Culture*. Edited by Susan A. Stephens and Phiroze Vasunia. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- "National Epic." *Wikipedia*. 26 Nov. 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_epic.

On Absences: The Erasure of Black Women in the *Cantigas de Santa María* (*Biblioteca de El Escorial MS T.I.1 and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze B.R.20*)

By Eileen McKiernan González

Abstract: The Escorial and Florentine *Cantigas de Santa María* (Esc. Ms. T.I.1 and B.R.20), lavishly illuminated thirteenth-century miracle cycles of 427 miracles and songs of praise, include forty-two miracles associated with Muslims. The representations of the Muslim community depict scenes of conversion and punishment to those who would do harm to the Eucharist, Marian images, churches, and Christian peoples. Muslims are also represented in times of war as leaders, victims, persecutors, and as members of a multi-ethnic community. Within these representations, Muslim men appear of two broad variants: light-skinned turbaned figures with long robes (indistinguishable beyond these markers) and dark-skinned, curly haired figures with shorter robes. The caricaturing of the faces of dark-skinned Muslim figures—rounder heads, fuller red lips, and curly hair—falls into the “Ethiopian” types of the era. Both of these peoples (Muslims and Ethiopians) appear in armies (as leaders, infantrymen, sailors, and cavalry) and as servants. Muslim women, like Jewish women, are not distinguishable to a great degree by clothing or physiognomy. Muslim women appear as wives and mothers, compliant with their husbands, defiant only in conversion in order to save their children. Dark-skinned women are not present in the *Cantigas*. This paper considers the complete absence of black female bodies in the representation of multifaith and multiracial communities in the *Cantigas de Santa María*.

The Virgin Mary of the *Cantigas de Santa María* is faithful to those who believe and pray to her. She protects people from a broad swathe of society. She does not distinguish by religion, so Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Polytheists find her protection. Likewise, she serves as patron for a long list of professions and social statuses: soldiers, sailors, scribes, and seamstresses are equally as likely to look to the Virgin in the *Cantigas*. The *Cantigas* finds Mary coming to the aid of victims as well as transgressors. Rapists, thieves, adulterers, nuns who abandon their vows, liars, gamblers, and all who repent and devotedly ask for her protection receive it. The pictorial representations of these peoples varies by profession, social status, as well as “race” and religion, though most appear in contemporary dress and are presented as types rather than individuals. The visual program of the *Cantigas* gives the appearance of Mary’s protection falling upon all segments of the society; suggesting, as Rhona Zaid notes, that “[e]very conceivable member of Spanish contemporary society is present here, from king to lowest peasant; the clergy, the court, the country are all recorded” (Zaid 146). The encyclopedic representation suggests that all peoples have access to Mary’s mercy and agency with a notable exception: for while black men are represented, there are no black women present. This absence of black women from the visual record implies their removal from Marian magnanimity.¹ While a

Eileen McKiernan González teaches Medieval Iberia (Modern Spain and Portugal), Women’s Patronage in the Middle Ages, and Cross-Cultural artistic Endeavors in the Modern World at Berea College.

¹This paper reflects work carried out for, and since, Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field in St. Louis, November 2018. At the conference, I considered multiracial armies in representations of Jaume I, king of the Crown of Aragon, in a miracle associated with the church in Arreixaca in Cantiga 169 of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, Escorial T.I.1. and the fresco cycle of the *Conquesta de Mallorca* (MNAC 071447-CJT)). After I noted the lacunae of black women in the session, Dorothy Kim encouraged the exploration of this theme. I continued this exploration at the 6th Biennial Conference of the Society for the Medieval Mediterranean in Barcelona, July 2019. The title of this

minority in Castile, the acquisition of slaves from raids and sieges into the Islamic south brought them (black females) into the domestic sphere. The differentiation, and access to mercy, of Muslim men of varied social and racial backgrounds and the representations of baptisms and conversion stories affirm the rise in the Mendicant drive for conversion in the thirteenth century. Yet, the absence of black Muslim women heightens the anxiety of racial difference and intimacy in the domestic sphere.

The *Cantigas de Santa María* is a miracle cycle, collected and composed in Galician-Portuguese and lavishly illuminated at the Toledan court of Alfonso X of Leon-Castilla (r. 1252-1284) and his son Sancho IV (1284-1295). There are four manuscripts: Toledo MS BNM Ms. 10069 is likely the earliest and incorporates illuminated initials; Escorial Ms. B.I.2 *Códice de los músicos* is the most complete and includes images of musicians performing the canticles before each new song of praise (Loor);² Escorial Ms. T.I.1 *Códice rico* is the most lavish in size and illumination, though contains half of the canticles; and Florentine Codex BNCF, Ms. B.R. 20 is similarly formatted to the *Códice rico*, but is smaller in size, incomplete, and begins where the *Códice rico* ends. The *Códice rico* is the earlier of the two heavily illuminated manuscripts and is generally accepted to have been completed during Alfonso's lifetime, between 1270 and 1282. The incomplete Florentine Codex was continued under the rule of Alfonso's son, Sancho. The images in this article come from these two manuscripts. The *Códice rico* has 210 full-page six-panel illuminations (See Figure 1) relating 195 Canticles (originally 203, the manuscript has lost 8 canticles) and it is within this richly illuminated manuscript that the dearth of visibly black women is most obvious. The Florentine Codex has 133 canticles, no musical notation, and only forty-eight of these are partial or complete full-page six-panel illuminations. Most critically, the only representation of a black female figure appears in this manuscript—not as a human woman, but as the serpent in the Garden of Eden in Cantiga 320. Here a black woman's head is added to the serpent's body. This absence and demonizing of black women's bodies are the central issues within this paper.

Castile: The Effects of Expansionism and Slavery

Toledo, where the scriptorium of the *Cantigas* was located, was a polyethnic society, having been the long-time capital of Muslim rule prior to Alfonso VI's conquest in 1085. Muslim peoples were allowed to continue living in the city with certain protections by the king. The descriptions of Toledo tend to emphasize a diversity of ethnicities, though two centuries later, the population would have shifted toward northern Castilians (Patton 236-237). Many would have also converted by this time, and these were integrated into the Christian society in ways that new Andalusian converts were not. The architecture and art of Toledo reflected the diverse, permeable interactions of peoples. Jerrilyn Dodds, María Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale explore the rich exchange of peoples, customs, and literary and material cultures of the city and region. Under Alfonso's rule, "Toledo in the second half of the twelfth century became the undisputed center of this new cultural empire, one explicitly dedicated to the metamorphosis of the legendary wealth of Islamic Spain into what would become the foundations of modern European thought" (205).

Miracle stories recounted in the *Cantigas* reflect a geography with a broad Mediterranean reach: contemporary events take place in Castile and Andalusia, miracles may happen as far away as Constantinople, and classic tales from France, Italy, and beyond are recounted. These Iberian territories are of

article comes from this second paper. I would like to thank Pamela Patton, Maureen Quigley, and Ashley Elston for their encouragement and assistance with various stages of this project.

²Walter Mettmann used the *Codice de los músicos* in creating a comprehensive critical edition of the *Cantigas* in *Alfonso I, el Sabio: Cantigas de Santa María*. In this text I use Mettmann's numbering, most divergent from the respective manuscript in the *Florentine Codex* where the numbering is re-started at I. In the *Codice Rico*, the only divergence in the illuminations considered here is Cantiga 185 (Mettmann 186). The two images from the *Florentine Codex* are Cantiga 5 (Mettmann 205) and Cantiga 40 (Mettmann 320). When using translation, I work with the critical translation of Kathleen Kulp-Hill in *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, The Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María*, whose work is still the standard.

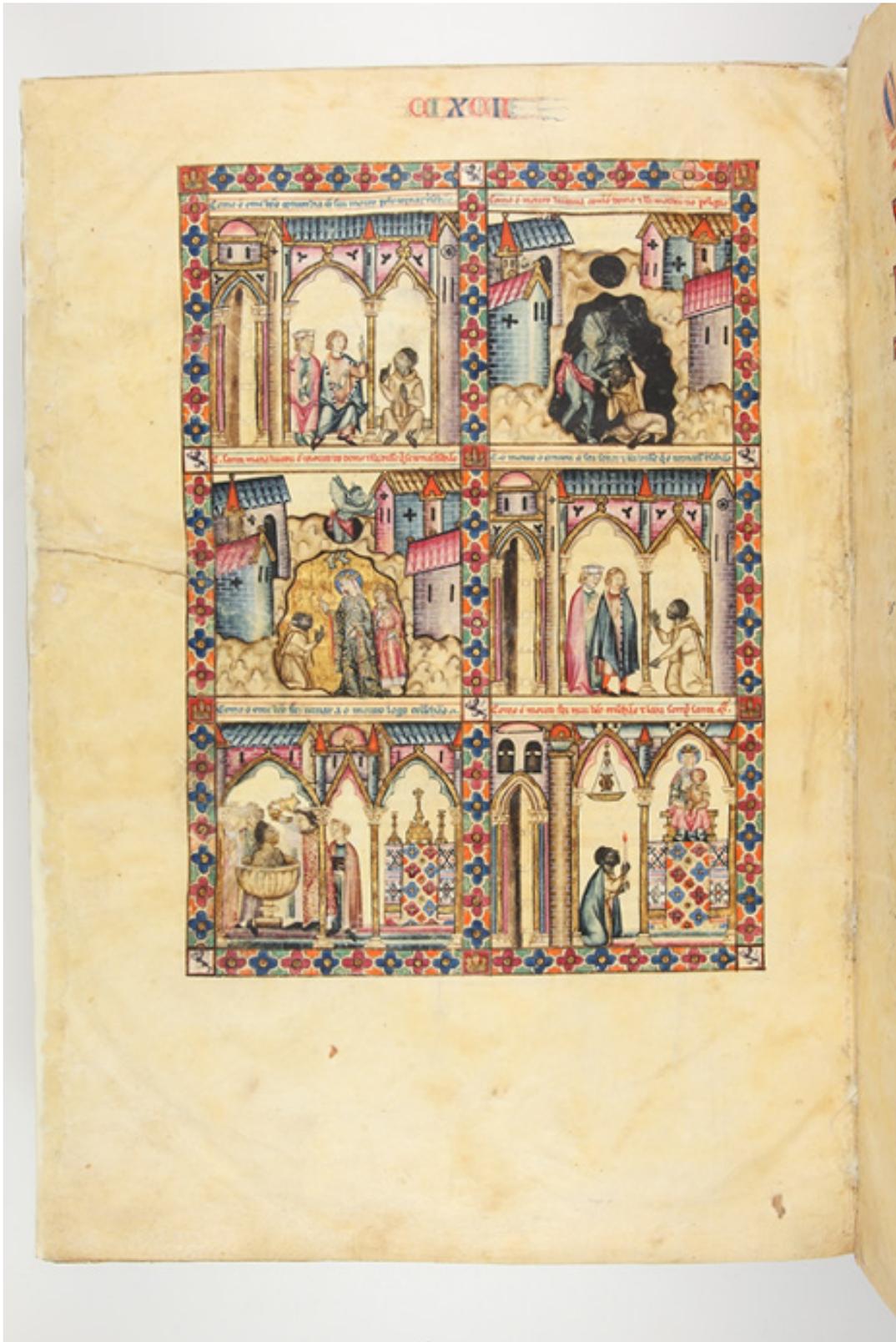


Figure 1. *Cantiga 192: "Muitas vegadas o dêm' enganados ten os homes" or The Muslim Servant* *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

mixed ancestry. Black Muslim women, like men in military companies, could have been present as townswomen—certainly as servants and slaves—to depict the multiethnic Andalusian and Castilian space. Indeed, as Pamela Patton summarizes, “Castile itself had seen a distinct growth in its numbers of black- and brown-skinned inhabitants, both men and women, slave and free, as the crown absorbed the population of conquered Islamic lands in the course of the later Reconquest” (Patton 236).³ The population of Muslims in Castile was a balance of *Mudejares* (Muslims who chose to remain under Christian rule post-conquest) or those forcibly brought to the region. Brian Catlos suggests that most of the Muslim population increase was a direct consequence of the practice of slave acquisition by raid or siege (*Kingdoms of Faith* 317-330). Given the breadth of the population and representation, the absence of the black female body is stark.

There is limited information about African Muslim women on the Iberian Peninsula beyond slave records, and these are heavily dependent on Arabic and Catalan sources. This literary and documentary lacuna begs the question of whether black women were present in thirteenth-century Castile. The demographics of medieval Iberia are complex and need more study, and much is lost from the archival record—particularly in Castile. Catlos notes that slaves in Castile (until the late fourteenth century) were almost exclusively Muslim in origin, and Castilian slavery was fed by the Reconquest and by raids into Muslim-controlled territory in the rapid military expansion post-1212 due to the military victory at Las Navas de Tolosa (*Muslims of Medieval* 262-263). The rise in Muslim slave populations in the aftermath of the territorial conquests are evident in the legislation provided for their treatment.

King Alfonso X’s law code, the *Siete Partidas*, was created between 1256 and 1265 and acknowledged the importance of slavery to Castilian society. The laws of the *Siete Partidas* governed the treatment and behavior of slaves in the territory. The *Siete Partidas* defined three types of slaves: prisoners of war; free men who gave up their freedom for servitude; and, children born of slaves (Phillips 28). It included rights mitigating the aspects of chattel slavery, including the right of slaves to own property (with the master’s consent), marriage (without the master’s consent), and limits on punishment (masters could not kill or mistreat slaves to the point of unbearable suffering). The existence of the law code confirms the presence of slaves in these territories.

Most studies looking at rising demographics of sub-Saharan peoples and the presence of racial pejorative stereotypes in Iberian literature and art focus on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries due to the rapid increase of trading in slaves resulting from Portuguese maritime expansion, and possibly resulting from life and labor implications after the bubonic plague in the prior century. It is also the case that Castilian representation of black women in literature does not become active until the sixteenth century, even though black men had appeared in the fourteenth century: such as in *El Conde Lucanor*, which includes a black unnamed groom (Rueda 108). When they do actively appear, black women no longer are associated with Islam, as the Portuguese slave trade had moved beyond this region. Where documentation provides more information, it focuses on the Crown of Aragon and Andalucía. Studies on Castile still rely on the work of Charles Verlinden and Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, particularly his pre-fifteenth century work. Most studies note that Castile was not an active slave state at this time. Late medieval Castile was not greatly involved in the Mediterranean activity and purchased few slaves from Mediterranean merchants.

Documentation of slaves identify physical characteristics, often color and origin, though not race as conceived of today. These characteristics are also connected to monetary value.⁴ Studies of slavery on the Iberian peninsula by Roser Salicrú, William Phillips, Lynn Ramey, and others have

³Domínguez Ortiz likewise considers a rise of Muslim converts, or *moriscos*, migration north in the aftermath of Castilian conquests under Fernando and Alfonso in the early thirteenth century and due to the repressive policies of the Almohads. The arrival of new Andalusian *moriscos* may have slowly given rise to the stress over false conversion of *conversos* and ultimately, to the obsession with “purity” of blood.

⁴As a side note, I was interested to see that the categories of color in use in Latin America are already found here, for example, *trigueño* (wheat toned) or *membrillo* (quince toned). Phillips, 75.

noted that women were generally held at higher monetary value, and in Catalunya and Valencia women outnumbered men, though not in Mallorca (Salicrú, 52-65). The skin color of slaves correlated to the resources expended by slavers; lighter skin led to greater monetary value. Relying on documentation from Arabic sources, these studies also consider the situation in Granada. Phillips provides an example through Muhammad al-Saqali, market inspector in the late-twelfth century and early thirteenth-century in Malaga (72). He associated origin—whether Berber, Roman, Meccan, Turkish—with physical attributes or suitability for certain skills. For example, Medinan women were associated with elegance; Ethiopians were associated activities of wet nurses. These attributes were connected to the slave's region of origin: a thirteenth-century Muslim slaver callously noted that to create the ideal slave woman one could take a nine-year old Berber girl, send her to Mecca for three years, Medina for another three, then finish her education in Iraq—looking to sell her at the age of twenty-five (72). This would bring together the voluptuousness of the Berber with the training and culture of Mecca, Medina, and Iraq.

Geraldine Heng and Peter Biller note that by the late middle ages, black female bodies already were associated with carnal pleasures, as these descriptions tend to suggest (Heng 212; Biller 486). Patton includes the positive representations of blackness in descriptions and representations of the bride in the Song of Songs and of the Queen of Sheba. Yet, even these emphasize aspects of sensuality and carnal pleasures and become increasingly pejorative in the next century (Patton 222; 231-232). These associations certainly led to the sexual exploitation of women in slavery. Brian Catlos and David Nirenberg present this exploitation in stark terms, including noting the limits that arise in Catalunya where the repercussions of forcing a slave into prostitution were stark. The physical exploitation of Muslim slave women in the domestic sphere included uses as wet nurses to such degrees that theologians like Ramon Llull explicitly argued against such domestic uses of black slave women in moral terms. Interestingly, Llull did not argue as regards the exploitation of the women, but for the moral health of the children (Winer 165-166). Simon Barton and Núria Silleras-Fernández include the possibilities of power that the association of beauty, exoticism, and intelligence could bring to a select few well-placed slaves.

Robert Bartlett considers the language of racial differentializing, specifically the lack of a comparable word, in Medieval Europe. Instead of classifications of race, the use of *gens* or *natio* is used to present group identities and the varied approaches to diverse peoples (Bartlett 42-43). Heng, in considering approaches to critical race theory, notes that “race has no singular or stable referent: that race is a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences, rather than a substantive content” (Heng 19). In medieval Iberia, religion was used as a differential until the fifteenth century. The language of the *Cantigas* presents *crischão*, *pagão*, *mouro*, *mafomete*, *judeu*, and occasionally *negro*. In the images of the *Cantigas* only *judeu* and *negro* are differentiated in physiognomy, and only for men.

Representations of the “Other” in the *Cantigas de Santa María*

The textual and visual representations of Jews and Muslims in these canticles appear in some similar ways—conversion and punishment to those who would do harm to Christians and their beliefs and practices including the Eucharist, Marian images, and churches. These fall squarely into anti-Semitic rhetorical formats and that pejorative treatment is extended to the Muslim community. Muslims,

generally identified as mouros or “Moors,”⁵ are also represented in times of war, both as leaders and persecutors, and as members of a multiethnic community. Of the 427 miracles and songs of praise, forty-two include depictions of Muslims and twenty-three include depictions of Jews.⁶ These representations have received a great deal of scholarly attention, initially focused on the Jewish community. More recently, scholarship has focused on the Muslim community, including the image of the dark-skinned Muslim—at times designated as Black, African Muslim, or African Moor. The text of the canticles does not often distinguish between light- and dark-skinned Muslims, leaving that decision to the illuminators.

Zaid synthesizes approaches to representations of Muslims in the *Cantigas* into three broad categories: “conversionary; spiritual superiority of Christianity; and, temporary Moslem [sic] superiority, on a physical level, primarily seen as a Christian punishment of sinning” (Zaid 147). Separation of Muslims and Christians was constructed legally, spatially, and intimately—though the intermediacy of servants and slaves obscures this space.

In the *Cantigas*, Christian men and Muslim men are dressed differently, but their physiognomy look about the same with the exception of black Muslims. This is distinct from the representation of Jewish men, who do have differentiated physiognomy and clothing. The black men fall into the stereotypical representation of the “Ethiopian” during this period, with rounder heads, kinky hair, bulbous nose, and thick lips (though not necessarily red).⁷ They are usually of a lower status, though not always: in Cantiga 46 (see panel three in Figure 2), one of the black figures appears among generals dividing the spoils of war. Women’s physiognomies are even less distinct.

Scholarly attention of the pejorative representation of black figures in the *Cantigas* is not new; Albert Bagley and Miriam DaCosta addressed the appearance of both black humans and demons in the 1970s. Discussions of dark-skinned, or Ethiopian, demons note that the choices in illuminating African Muslim people in a similar manner confers a correlation of darkness to sinfulness. More recently, Zaid, Patton, and Nirenberg, among others, have pushed the analysis of these figures in light of broader approaches to the demonic, the sinful feminine, and the monstrous. More on this below.⁸

Nine *Cantigas* include dark-skinned men, presumed to be Muslims. In six of the nine illuminations, black men appear as soldiers:

Cantiga 46: “Porque hajan de seer séus miragres mais sabudos” or “The Moor who Venerated the Image of the Virgin Mary” (Footmen and leaders, Ultramar)

Cantiga 63: “Quen ben sérv’ a Madre do que quis morrer” or “The Knight who Missed the Battle” (Cavalry, San Esteban de Gormaz, Soria)

Cantiga 95: “Quen aos sérvos da Virgen de mal se traballa” or “The Hermit who was Captured by the Moors” (Sailors, Portugal)

Cantiga 99: “Muito se deven teer por gentes de mal recado” or “The Moors who Tried to Destroy the Image of the Virgin” (Footmen, Location unspecified)

Cantiga 165: “Niún poder destem undo de gente nada nan val” or “The Celestial Knights who Protected the City of Tartus” (Footmen and cavalry, Tartus, Syria)

Cantiga 169: “A que por nos salvar fezo Déus Madr’ e Filla” or “The Church of Arreixaca is Protected

⁵While the term *Moor* appears regularly in literature, it has fallen into disfavor due to the history of racializing and stereotype leading to a pejorative history of representation.

⁶Two searchable databases now ease this type of analysis. *The Centre for the Study of the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Oxford University* allows for searches by topic, keyword, location, and description at <http://csm.mml.ox.ac.uk/> and Musicologist Andrew Casson’s *Cantigas de Santa Maria for Singers* includes the full searchable text of the poems in the original Galician-Portuguese at <http://www.cantigasdesantamaria.com/>

⁷The dark skin, kinky hair, round eyes, rounder head, and thick lips began to appear in Roman art and continued through the middle ages. For an overview of the representation of black figures across the ancient and medieval Mediterranean, see *The Image of the Black in Western Art*.

⁸For consideration of aspects of race and the monstrous, Freedman, Hahn, and Strickland provide complex understandings of othering of the foreigner within and of peoples beyond the known borderlands.

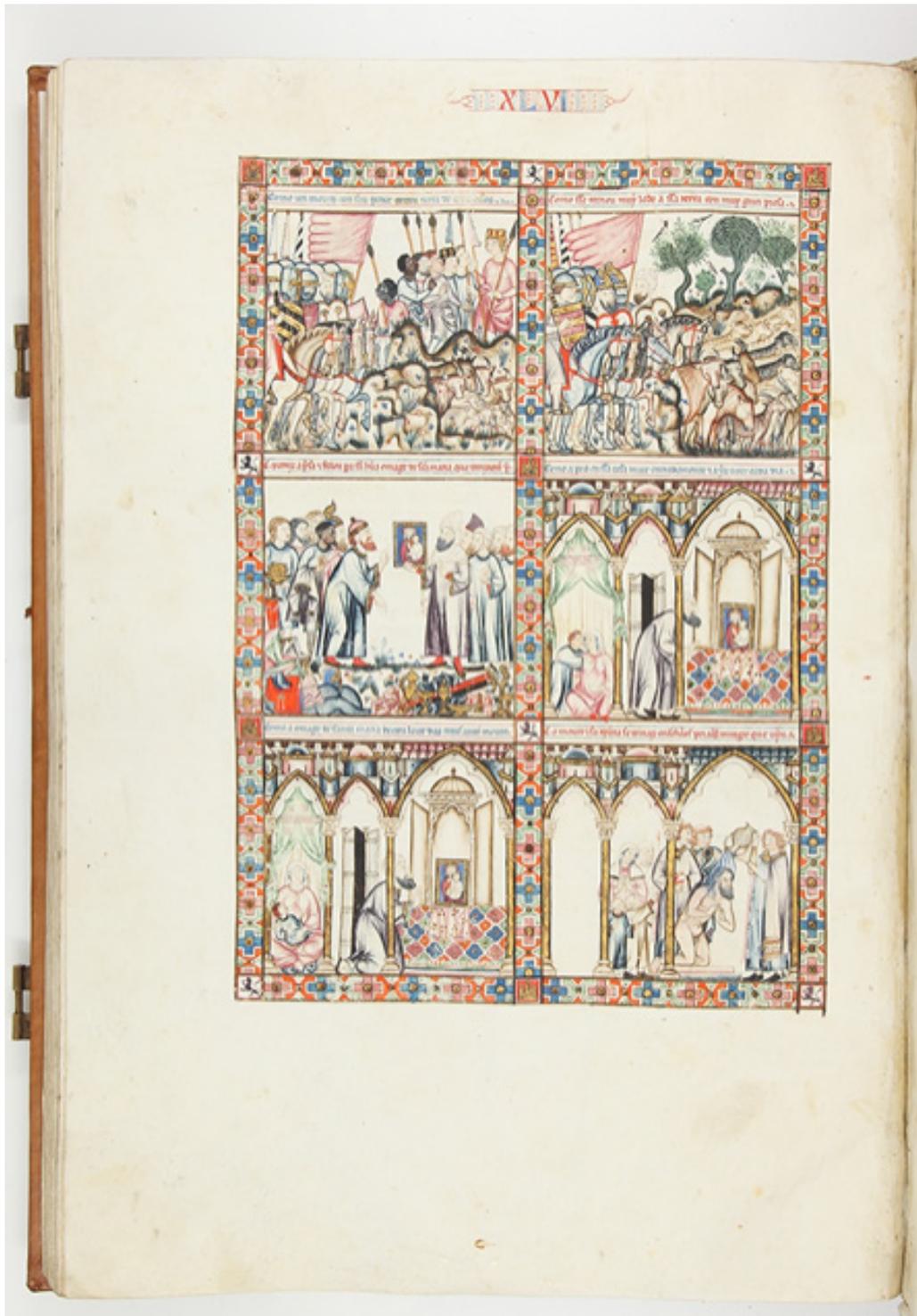


Figure 2. Cantiga 46: “Porque hajan de seer séus miragres mais sabudos” or *The Moor who Venerated the Image of The Virgin Mary*,” *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

by the Virgin” (Footmen, Arreixaca, Murcia)

The miracles situate the multiracial armies as far as Syria, and as close as Soria. Additionally, not all armies categorized as *mouro*, on the peninsula or across the sea, include black soldiers. How to represent these armies falls to the illuminators; the text of the *Cantigas* rarely refers to figures as black. This is also the case of the remaining three *Cantigas* with dark-skinned figures: two involving servants, likely slaves (*Cantigas* 186 and 192), and one involving a dark-skinned figure as a witness in an image of the Holy Sepulchre (in *Cantiga* 9 regarding the transportation of a miraculous icon).

The text of the *Cantigas* may use darkness to connote evil, in descriptions such as “chus negros que Satanás” (Canticle 186), or blacker than Satan. Still, in many images *mouro* can be depicted as dark-skinned or light-skinned, turbaned or bareheaded, soldier or leader, even low or high status. For example, two *Cantigas* present Muslims going through a process of conversion to Christianity. While the dark-skinned Muslim in *Cantiga* 192 (“Muitas vegadas o dém’ enganados ten os homes,” or “The Muslim Servant” (Figure 1)) is in a servile position and is tormented by demons prior to conversion, the convert in *Cantiga* 46 (“Porque hajan de seer séus miragres mais sabudos,” or “The Moor who Venerated an Image of the Virgin Mary” (Figure 2)) is neither servile nor tormented. The high-status *mouro* in *Cantiga* 46 is captivated by the icon of Mary and selects this object as his part of the spoils of war in the aftermath of a battle. His devotion to the image, and by extension to Mary, increases and eventually he is rewarded by the image miraculously lactating; his conversion follows. The Muslim devotion to Mary is in keeping with religious tradition; as noted by Amy Remensnyder, the veneration of her in a figural form, challenges religious precepts (*La Conquistadora* 139-146). The *mouro*’s wife seems unconcerned by his devotions to the image, and her parallelism to Mary in the fifth panel—seated on cushions versus the throne in the icon—connects the women through the sustenance that they provide their children. The final panel incorporates the mother and the child as witnesses to the husband’s conversion. The text does not note their conversion, but does affirm the conversion of the Muslim general’s followers, and other acquaintances (Kulp-Hill 62).

Cantiga 46 is also the only *Cantiga* that includes a high-status dark-skinned figure: one of the generals who shares in the spoils of conquest appears bearded, unusual though not unique, already having collected some garb. He is in line with the other leaders, though his robes are not of the length of the soon-to-be convert. By contrast, the text of *Cantiga* 192 (“Porque hajan de seer séus miragres mais sabudos,” or “The Muslim Servant”) presents the torments of a black slave. The text of the *Cantiga* does not describe the *mouro* as black, only as a captive, *cativo*; it is the illuminator’s interpretation, likely based on the servile position of the Muslim in the household. The lyrics of the poem simply describe the servant of “d’Almaria mouro” and a “Mafométe.” The canticle is often entitled “The Black Servant,” likely due to the illuminator’s approach to the figure. Servants (and slaves) of this period could be both light or dark-skinned. The term of slave does not appear in the *Cantigas*, instead, capture and ransom communicates this status, using the term “*cativo*.” The term is most used in the case of Christians captured and sold, then ransomed (*Cantigas* 83, 325, and 359). The physical torment of slaves is reserved for the mistreatment of Christian captives by Muslim captors.

In *Cantiga* 192, the Christian man actively seeks to convert his servant/captive through persuasion and then through bribery; but, the slave rejects the Christian doctrine. The master then places the captive in a cave where demons torment the captive at night. After Mary saves the captive from the demons, the servant confesses his vision and his desire to convert to the master. The captive servant is then baptized. The two stages—as relates permission to be baptized—further suggest that the servant is a slave. The final scene depicts the convert kneeling before the image of Mary. Most conversion miracles end with the baptism.

Jean Devisse and Robert Burns posit a connection between the representation of a black *mouro*'s conversion and the increased proselytizing activity among Mendicants in Aragón and in Castile (Devisse 82-83; Burns 1432). The connection highlighted by Devisse and Burns would emphasize the grace open to all who would seek baptism.⁹ As opposed to the conversion of Jews—where Sara Lipton suggests a modifying, or lightening, of features such as the prominent nose of the Jewish convert in Cantiga 25 (“Pagar ben pód’ o que dever,” or “The Jewish Moneylender and the Christian Merchant)—no shift in physiognomy accompanies the baptism of the black *mouro*. In the end, both converts kneel in their devotions to the image of Mary. The contrast is striking, however. While the kneeling convert in Cantiga 46 appears naked and full length, emphasizing his whiteness and masculinity, the convert in Cantiga 192 appears in the more typical baptismal font, perhaps feminized through this format.

While the black Muslim slave in Cantiga 192 is brought into the Christian fold post-torture, the second representation of a black Muslim slave is condemned to death. In Cantiga 186 (“Quen na Virgen santa muito fiará,” or “The Woman whose Mother-in-law Plotted her Death” (Figure 3)), the servant/slave is described as black: “mouro, que éra ben tan negro com pez” (moor who was black, as black as pitch).¹⁰ In this canticle, a woman who despises her daughter-in-law plots against the daughter-in-law with the aid of her servant, referred to as *séu mouro*, “her Moor,” likely a slave. She orders the servant to lay in bed with the sleeping woman in order to accuse her of infidelity with a Muslim—a transgression punishable by death. The *Siete Partidas* stipulates that “if a Moor has sexual intercourse with a Christian married woman, he shall be stoned to death, and she shall be placed in the power of her husband who may burn her to death, or release her, or do what he pleases with her” (Barton 51). The *mouro* complies with the order and both are condemned to death by fire. Mary protects the young woman from the flames, while the Muslim slave, described as false and treacherous, is consumed until “not a single sign of him remained” (Kulp-Hill 223). Seeing the miracle, the mother-in-law repents, confesses to her treachery, accepts the daughter-in-law, and the two women live on in harmony. No punishment is wrought on the mother-in-law by state or divine hands.

Cantiga 186 speaks to the social and legal anxiety over interreligious sexual relations, particularly relations between Christian women and non-Christian men. Yet, this anxiety over women’s bodies was as profound for both the Jewish and Muslim communities on the peninsula. Barton explores a variety of cases surviving in documentary records on both sides of this issue (Barton 46-56). Adultery outside of co-religionists carried severe punishment, even death. Yet, conversion to Christianity could be a way out of the sentence of their own community or of entry into slavery. Cantiga 107 speaks to this anxiety and to Mary’s role in protecting women in this situation through miracle and conversion.

Cantiga 107 (“Quen crevér na Virgen santa, ena coita valer-ll-á,” or “The Jewish Woman who was Thrown from a Cliff” (Figure 4)) depicts a Jewish woman condemned to death by her community, likely for taking a Christian lover. Although, this is not specified in the text. The Cantiga only notes that “It was for a Jewess who was caught in a crime and arrested and taken to be hurled from a high and rugged cliff in that place (Segovia)” (Kulp-Hill 134). Remensnyder notes the close connection to the story of Marisaltos: a Jewish woman, accused of adultery with a Christian knight, whose hands were bound (as in panel three), who was hurled from a cliff, and who survived due to miraculous intervention (*La Conquistadora* 175-178). The mira-

⁹The documentation of conversion is complex, as it could lead to manumission, especially if the slave was property of Jewish or Muslim peoples living in Christian lands. While the Franciscans may have been actively learning Arabic, with Jaime II’s great support, and actively seeking to bring Muslims to Christianity, the status-quo was maintained, and few Muslims chose conversion (Catlos, 2014, 272-276).

¹⁰The only other poem that I found that includes the qualifier of black to Muslims was in Cantiga 329, not illuminated, that notes “Aquel mouro que estava mui mas negro que o pez” (blacker than pitch). In this canticle a group

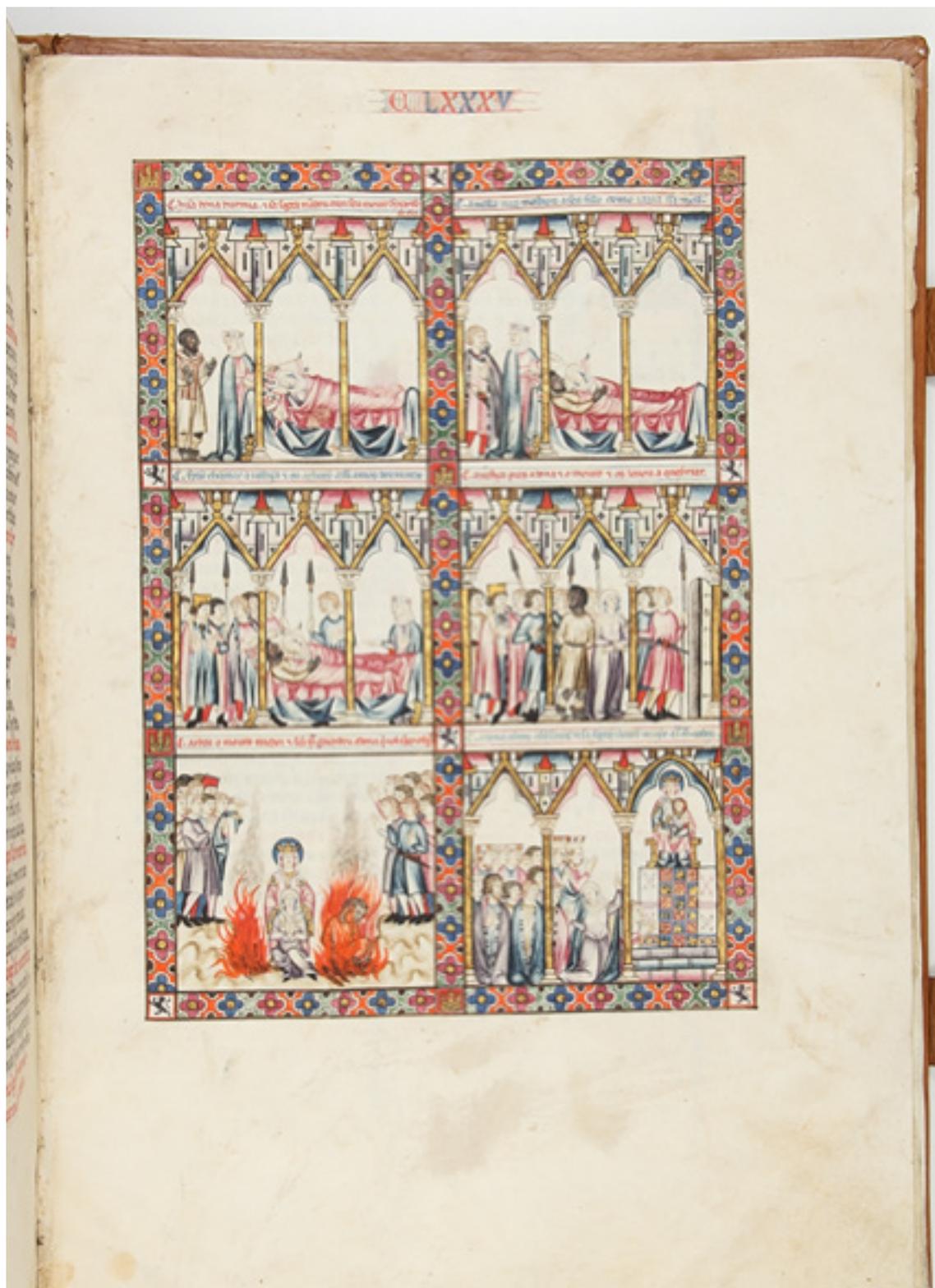


Figure 3. Cantiga 186: “*Quen na Virgen santa muito fiará*” or “*The Woman Whose Mother-in-law Plotted her Death,*” *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

of Muslim men give alms to a statue of the Virgin, one of them, described in the quote, takes the coins for himself and is paralyzed. Once the coins are restored, the man recovers. Blackness here suggests greed and disrespect of Mary’s image juxtaposed against his ‘good Muslim’ friends. The devotion of Muslims to Mary in the context of Iberian reconquista is discussed by Amy Remensnyder in *La Conquistadora*, 139-146 and Alexandra Cuffel 38-43.

cle described by the Dominican Rodrigo de Cerrato has the Jewish woman falsely accused by a Christian neighbor and the Christian authorities condemning her. In panel one, Jewish and Christian men surround the woman and the decree appears as an agreement between the communities' authorities, although it has the semblance of mob summary judgement. Upon her survival, the woman requests baptism and changes her name to Marisaltos (Maria and saltus "jump").



Figure 4. *Cantiga 107: "Quen crevêr na Virgen santa, ena coita valer-ll-á"* or "The Jewish Woman who was Thrown from a Cliff," *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

Lipton argues that representations of conversions of Jewish women suggest that the illuminators have followed the idea of the “Jewish witness” and “effectively embodied in the sign of the Jewish woman, whose face and body encode weakness and pliability, receptivity to dominance and potential for change” (Lipton 160). Lipton’s characterizations of Jewish women apply to Muslim women as well. They appear as pliable, open to conversion, irrespective of the reality. Yet this idealized vision does not reflect the reality as Remensnyder notes:

... it took rare circumstances to make Muslim women freely convert to Christianity. Even Muslim women living under Christian rule were far less likely than their male counterparts to convert, unless they found themselves in one of two situations: either they were captives of Christians or they were women who, having slept with Christian men, could escape harsh punishments that would otherwise be their lot by converting. (“Christian Captives” 663)

Jonathan Ray describes this stress within the Jewish community relative to conversion and integration into the Christian fold. He notes the praise of one rabbi of another for his quick and harsh action after a Jewish woman is accused of taking a Christian lover (Ray 8). The rabbi ordered the disfigurement of the woman’s face before she could convert. The implication being that in the aftermath of the punishment she would have remained within her religious community as a visible sign of the penalties of interreligious sexual transgression. Interfaith sexual relations also could lead to further exploitation of Jewish and Muslim women. The community’s penalty of death was not generally observed for women, as the complicated relationship of these communities to their kings meant they could not be killed. Instead, their sentences would be commuted to slavery dictated by the king. The danger of even an unsubstantiated accusation for a Christian woman, however, could lead to death, as represented in Cantiga 186. Brian Catlos and David Nirenberg, respectively, consider the legal exploitation of women in these cases. Both use Catalan sources, by and large, though Amy Remensnyder’s discussion of the case of Marisaltos is within the Castilian context (*La Conquistadora* 175-180).

Cantiga 107 is one of twelve conversion stories in the *Cantigas* illuminations (ten are represented in the *Códice rico*). Four illuminations depict the conversion of women. Two depict Jewish women. Two depict Muslim women. The three additional illuminations of women’s conversions emphasize maternal devotion in Cantigas 86, 167, and 205. In these miracles, non-Christian women place their faith in Mary for a safe birth, the revival of a dead son, and to survive a siege with their child.

The first of these, Cantiga 89 (“A Madre de Deus honrrada chega sen tardada,” or “The Jewish Woman who was Helped in Childbirth” (Figure 5)), depicts a woman whose delivery is so long and painful that neither the midwives nor doctors can help, yet the Virgin helps her and a healthy son is born.

The illuminators emphasize the difficult delivery by using three panels to heighten the size of the woman’s belly. In each panel, her daughter attends to her, as do other women, and in panel three a small cloud at the top of the image reveals the miracle. Her companions hear the birthing-woman’s beseeching of Mary and the companions flee, denouncing the woman as a heretic, apostate, and Christian convert (Kulp-Hill 114). The women in the fourth panel can be seen shaking their hands and departing in the doorway. The mother recovers from the activities of birth for thirty days in convalescence and then requests baptism for herself and for her two children; the three appear in the last panel together in the baptismal font.



Figure 5. Cantiga 89: “A Madre de Déus honrrada chega sen tardada” or “The Jewish Woman who was Helped in Childbirth,” *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

Cantiga 167 (“Quen quer que na Virgen fia,” or “The Muslim Child who was Revived in Salas” (Figure 6)) depicts the miracle of a Muslim mother, who, after the death of her son, takes him to the Virgin in Salas, and he is revived.



Figure 6. Cantiga 167: “*Quen quer que na Virgen fia*” or “*The Muslim Child who was Revived at Salas*,” *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

As in the prior miracle, the Muslim mother is challenged by her community in her decision to call upon Mary, but she prevails, going on pilgrimage to the shrine of Santa María de Salas. Marian devotion did cross the lines of religious devotion among Muslim and Christian believers as Remensnyder explores in *La Conquistadora*, yet Muslims reviling the devotion to Mary from coreligionists is a regular trope in the *Cantigas* (*La Conquistadora* 147-148). After a vigil that carries the distraught mother through the night, her son is revived. He had been dead for three days. He “at once became a Christian” (Kulp-Hill 202).

Finally, in Cantiga 205 (“Oraçõn con piädade oe a Virgen de grado,” or “The Muslim Woman who Survived a Seige” (Figure 7)), the mother holds her son in the midst of the destruction of the castle by flames, and is saved.



Figure 7. Cantiga 205: “Oraçõn con piädade oe a Virgen de grado” or “The Muslim Woman who Survived a Seige,” *Cantigas de Santa María*, early 1290s, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS B.R.20 (by concession of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo/Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze)

The canticle is very specific about the circumstances of the miracle. Don Alfonso Téllez, a worthy nobleman, was part of a Christian army coming from Uclés and Calatrava. The fierce attack leads to the community taking refuge in a tower; the Christian soldiers then set the tower on fire. The community within begin to throw themselves from the tower in an attempt to survive the flames, but many perish from the fall. The mother climbs to the top, sitting between two merlons with her son, “who she loved more than herself” (Kulp-Hill 246). As the fire rages, mother and child sit untouched. Then, Don Gonzalo Eanes of Calatrava and Alfonso Téllez order the final assault on the tower. The tower is completely destroyed. Yet, the mother and child are found alive between the merlons and the mother “looked to them [Don Eanes and Téllez] like the statue of the Holy Virgin Mary depicted with Her son held in Her arms” (Kulp-Hill 247). In the illumination in the fourth panel, the parallelism is depicted not just through the woman’s body, but in her son lifting his hand as he reaches for his mother’s cloak, replicating the statue’s Christ Child’s hand lifted in blessing. The mother and child are transported down miraculously and all present are astounded, represented by combining two panels to create the scene—yet still suggesting separation through the frame. Rather than death or enslavement, the mother and son are baptized surrounded by their new community in the final panel. The canticle describes the terror of what siege warfare entails. In this miracle, the faith of a mother, love of her son, and openness of the soldiers to this Muslim mother in the aftermath of carnage are complex representations of the religious dimensions of this conflict.

These three depictions emphasize the role of motherhood in the conversion process. Three of the four women beseech Mary for aid in helping their children survive. Of the four conversion miracles, only Cantiga 107 presents a woman transgressing. The conversion stories associated with Jewish and Muslim men tend to emphasize their initial wrongdoing and miracles that chastise them for attempted deception or abuse. Paternal qualities are not emphasized. In fact, two Jewish fathers attempt to kill their sons in Cantiga 4 (“A Madre do que livrou dos leões Daniél,” or “The Murdered Jewish Boy”) and Cantiga 108 (“Dereit’ é de s’ end’ achar mal quen fillar perfia,” or “Merlin and the Jew”).

Women’s roles as mothers are celebrated in the *Cantigas*; motherhood is one of the characteristics that unifies all women. It is also the one that is often used to connect to Mary. One of the aspects of Cantiga 46 (“The Moor who Venerated the Image of the Virgin Mary”) is the parallel that is made between the convert’s wife, suckling their child, and the miraculous image of Mary lactating. The mother and child support the husband in his baptism. Ana Domínguez Rodríguez and Connie Scarborough reflect on the primacy of motherhood within the narratives in the *Cantigas*. Both scholars consider miracles of Jewish and Muslim women coming to conversion as part of the maternal drive to protect their children, particularly their male children (Domínguez Rodríguez 39-40; Scarborough 59-87). It is in this role that they transgress the borders between the faiths.

Women in the Cantigas, Representation, and Erasure

Women in the *Cantigas*, as noted by Lipton, are not strongly differentiated in appearance. They are depicted as mothers and wives, with typical long tunics, cloaks, and head coverings. Status is demonstrated through embellishments of the tunic, varied head coverings, and their physical contexts. Jewish and Christian women’s physiognomies and items of clothing are indistinguishable; Muslim women’s physiognomies are likewise generic, though clothing may include a longer veil (as in panels four and five in Canticle 46).¹¹ In essence, women are raceless, not distinguishable in their physiognomies, just as regards their respective stations—queens, nuns, wives, tradeswomen.¹²

¹¹There are also seventeen *Cantigas* that include nuns. These are generic in representation and differentiated by order through variations in the color of their robes (Cistercian vs. Benedictine, as are monks).

¹²Girls are not present, babies are—such as the baby princess, daughter of don Fernando, likely the infanta Berenguela, who survives an illness and is given as an oblate to the Cistercian Monastery of Las Huelgas in Canticle 122: “Mirages

Lipton addresses the conversion story of a Muslim woman in Cantiga 167. She suggests that in the baptismal scene, which includes the woman's uncovered hair and shoulders, the representation of long luscious hair is a singular moment of Muslim stereotype and exoticism (Lipton 159). Yet, Jewish women receive that same representation in these scenes. At the time of baptism, all appear with the same flowing hair and are not differentiated by whether the miracle represents a Muslim or Jewish woman's conversion, or whether they are associated with a mother's devotion or the woman's salvation from punishment (Figure 8 is a composite of the four baptismal scenes). The distinction between Jewish and Muslim converts appears in the representation of the women in profile (Jewish) or frontal (Muslim) views. The frontal views, interestingly, parallel the statue of the Virgin and Child appearing in the two Muslim women's conversions.



Figure 8. Details of four baptisms: From top left to right: Cantigas 89, 107, 167, and 205. First three from *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL), the last from *Florentine Cantigas de Santa María*, early 1290s, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS B.R.20 (by concession of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo/Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze)

muitos pelos reis faz Santa María” or “The Infanta who was Brought Back to Life.” In Cantiga 89: “The Jewish Woman who was Helped in Childbirth”, the Jewish mother's conversion is accompanied by her miraculous child and by her older daughter. The daughter appears in several panels as a miniature adult woman. She also appears in the baptismal font as slightly larger than the baby.

Many of the images depicting secular women are set in urban areas or within the domesticity of households. These have few referents to identity beyond womanhood. The misogynist stress over women's behavior tends toward the vilifying of sexual activity.¹³

While the ideal of chastity is emphasized repeatedly in the miracle stories, Marian mercy does protect those who transgress those boundaries. Two canticles have sex workers as the main protagonists: in Cantiga 237, Mary provides solace and keeps alive a woman who is raped and murdered by a client in order for the woman to confess her sins and in Cantiga 305, when a moneylender tries to dismiss the devotee, the miracle provides her wealth and punishes the moneylender. Both of these cases include language of poverty and of sinful behavior. In Cantiga 305, for example, the woman is described as a poor woman who is a sinner, “mesquinna mollér que pecador éra,” balanced with deep devotion to Mary.¹⁴ That devotion could also protect a woman from rape. In Cantiga 317, a dissolute knight purchases a beautiful maiden from her father, who has agreed to the transaction due to his poverty and greed. The young woman is spared by the knight who sends her to a monastery instead of raping her.

Cantiga 317, sale, and Cantiga 205, siege, present two modes of entry into slavery for women on the Iberian peninsula. The vulnerabilities of these women to exploitation, particularly of their bodies, forced or sold into concubinage, domestic servitude (including as wet-nurses), even prostitution, given the rise of legislation to stop this abuse, are represented in varied ways within the *Cantigas*. The vulnerabilities of women varied within thirteenth-century Iberian society.

As with the Muslim servant in Cantiga 192, miracle stories touch on, though do not address directly, slavery. Yet, as opposed to the representations of black or African Muslim men, there are no miracle stories with black Muslim women and no women are described as black in the text. The only textual references to blackness and the feminine appear in illness or shock, such as in Cantiga 84. In Cantiga 84, a wife's face turns black as coal (“mais negra que un carvôn”) from the shock of hearing of her husband's supposed infidelity. The illuminators do not depict this shift in physiognomy. Just as the presences of black and brown women do not manifest in pictorial or textual forms within the *Cantigas*, the abuse of slavery is not addressed explicitly.

Demonizing and the Exotic in the Cantigas

The *Cantigas de Santa María's* representation of blackness also includes representations of the demonic in large percentage. However, representations tend toward figures that include greater deviation from the human form. In Cantiga 192 of the Muslim Servant, the tormenting demon is an example of the more typical representation: dark blue-grey skin and fur, bat wings, horns, bird feet or hooves, and mostly uncovered (See Figure 9 for a detail). On occasion, when in a group, the skin might also be a dark ochre, but not the dark brown of the “Ethiopian” figures. While all tend to be grouped as dark-skinned figures, there is a distinction by virtue of the zoomorphic elements and ink color.

¹³Perhaps the exception to this condemnation is the story of the adulteress in Cantiga 68: “A Groriosa grandes faz miragre,” or “The Wife and the Mistress.” In the canticle, a wife discovers her husband's infidelity, she prays to the Virgin for misfortune to be visited upon the mistress. In one of the few examples of Mary refusing one of her devotees, Mary protects the mistress as she is also a devoted follower. The wife seeks the mistress's forgiveness.

¹⁴There are also many Cantigas that include sexual transgressions of nuns and wives. In four of the seventeen miracles associated with nuns (Cantigas 7, 55, 94, 285), for example, Mary hides pregnancies or takes the nun's place until they



Figure 9. Detail of panel two from *Cantiga 192*: “*Muitas vegadas o dêm’ enganados ten os homes*” or *The Muslim Servant*” *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I. (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

Two examples of demonizing dark-skinned “Ethiopian” type figures appear in these manuscripts. The first, *Cantiga 82* (“*A Santa María mui bon server faz*” (Figure 10)) is generally referred to as “The Demon Swine” and depicts a Canterbury monk tormented in his bedchamber. The poem notes that the monk saw a black man enter, “*viu entrar un hóme negro de coor.*” The demon who guides the swine into the monk’s chamber is stereotypically “Ethiopian,” having been described as a black man instead of a demon. The one concession to the demonic status is a short tail visible in panel three, along with the figure’s nudity.

repent and return to their communities.

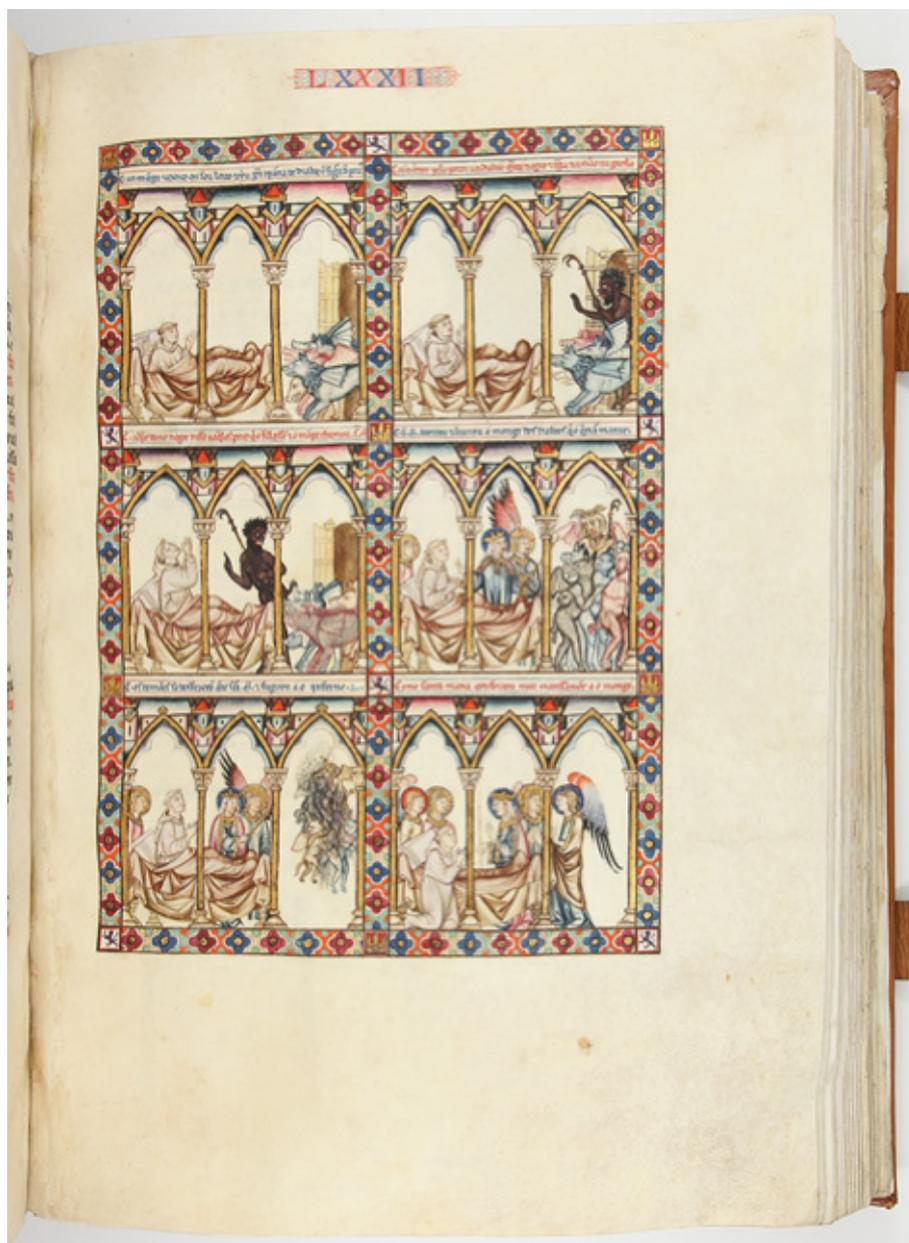


Figure 10. Cantiga 82: "A Santa Maria mui bon server faz" or "The Demon Swine." *Cantigas de Santa María*, ca. 1280, Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 (© PATRIMONIO NACIONAL)

The poem describes the fear of the monk before the black demon's demand of the swine to disturb his sleep. It is the swine that notes the impossibility of tormenting the monk due to his great saintliness, "gran santidade que en ele jaz" (Kulp-Hill 106). The demon conducts the torment only to have Mary come to the monk's aid, brandishing a stick against the demon. The stick is visible in the next three panels.

Cantiga 320 ("Santa Maria leva o ben que perdeu Eva," or "Holy Mary Restores the Good Which Eve Lost" (Figure 11)) is partially illuminated in the *Florentine Codex* and goes further to depict the tempting serpent as both female (typical of this time period) and dark-skinned.¹⁵ This canticle is one of the songs of praise, as opposed to miracle stories, known as *Cantigas de Loor*. The poem juxtaposes Eve's loss of temerity and fear of God, breaking of God's commandments, and folly to Mary, who restores the "good" through humility by befriending God, believing in God without question, and understanding.



Figure 11. Cantiga 320: "Santa Maria leva o ben que perdeu Eva" or "Holy Mary Restores the Good Which Eve Lost." *Cantigas de Santa María*, early 1290s, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS B.R.20 (by concession of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo/Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze)

¹⁵In Cantiga 219, unfortunately not illuminated, the Virgin turns a white marble sculpture of the devil black, emphasizing the association of darkness with sin.

Patton has quite recently analyzed Cantiga 320 in light of the dichotomies of the Eva/Ave paradigm, adding the elements of darkness to that of the sinful feminine. Her focus on the representations and pejorative stereotypes of a black woman's body adds to the ongoing scholarly focus on blackness (Patton 219-222). She notes that the dark-skinned temptresses "merged familiar stereotypes concerning the sexuality of Ethiopians with similarly venerable conceptions of the female body as both inherently lascivious and dangerously tempting" (229). In these images it is not just the dark skin, but the artist's exaggerations of large reddish lips and large eyes that heighten perceived differences.

The hypersexualization and exoticism embedded in the representations and associations of black women's bodies and their dangerous threats to the established aspects of social order—particularly the racial and the religious—appear present in thirteenth century Castile. Núria Silleras-Fernández explores the exoticization of black female bodies in the next century in the Catalan courts, including the possible avenues to wealth for a few for whom the connections of sensuality, exoticism, and beauty have been found salient. For most though, sexual exploitation would have been a reality of slavery and of poverty. Patton notes, in looking at Cantiga 320, that "the artist's audacious decision to represent Satan with the head of a black-skinned woman seems ideally calibrated for a Castilian viewer in whose daily experience black skin and femininity bore salient and complex meanings" (237). The absence of black Muslim women in the remainder of the manuscript heightens the anxiety of racial difference and intimacy in the domestic sphere.

Works Cited

- Bagby, Albert L. "Some Characterizations of the Moor in Alfonso X's "Cantigas." *The South Central Bulletin* 30.4 (1970): 164-167.
- Bartlett, Robert. "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001): 39-56.
- Barton, Simon. *Conquerors, Brides, and Concubines: Interfaith Relations and Social Power in Medieval Iberia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- Biller, Peter. "Proto-Racial Thought in Medieval Science." In *The Origins of Racism in the West*. Eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Zeigler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 157-180.
- Bollo-Panadero, María Dolores. "Heretics and Infidels: The *Cantigas de Santa María* as Ideological Instrument of Cultural Codification." *Romance Quarterly* 55.3 (2008): 163-173.
- Burns, Robert I. "Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion." *The American Historical Review* 76.5 (1971): 1386-1434.
- Catlos, Brian. *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain*. New York: Basic Books, 2018.
- . *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom c. 1050-1614*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Cuffel, Alexandra. "'Henceforth all generations will call me blessed': Medieval Christian Tales of Non-Christian Marian Veneration." *Mediterranean Studies* 12 (2003): 37-60.
- DaCosta, Miriam. "The Portrayal of Blacks in a Spanish Medieval Manuscript." *Negro History Bulletin* 31.1 (1974): 193-196.
- Devisse, Jean. "The Black and His Color: From Symbols to Realities." Chapter 2 of *The Image of the Black in Western Art*. Edited by Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010 (2nd Edition).
- Dodds, Jerrilynn, Maria Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale. *The Arts of Intimacy: Christian, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Domínguez Ortiz, Antonio. *Historia de los Moriscos: Vida y Tragedia de Una Minoría*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1993 (reprint).

- Domínguez Rodríguez, Ana. "Imágenes de la Mujer en las *Cantigas de Santa María*." *La Imagen de la Mujer en el Arte Español: Actas de las Terceras Jornadas de Investigación InterDisciplinaria*. Madrid: Ediciones Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1984, 29-42.
- Freedman, Paul. "The Medieval Other: The Middle Ages as Other." In *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imagination*. Eds. Timothy James and David A. Sprunger. Kalamazoo: 2002, 1-24.
- Hahn, Thomas. "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001): 1-38.
- Heng, Geraldine. *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Kulp-Hill, Kathleen. *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, The Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000.
- Lipton, Sara. "Where Are the Gothic Jewish women? On the Non-Iconography of the Jewess in the *Cantigas de Santa María*." *Jewish History* 22 (2008): 139-177.
- Mettmann, Walter. *Alfonso I, el Sabio: Cantigas de Santa María*. Madrid: Castalia, 1986-1989.
- Nirenberg, David. "Medieval Media and Minorities: Jews and Muslims in the *Cantigas de Santa María*." *Authority and Spectacle in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Teofilo F. Ruiz*. Ed. Yuen-Gen and Jarabel Rodriguez. London: Routledge, 2017, 147-170.
- O'Callaghan, Joseph. *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.
- Patton, Pamela. "An Ethiopian-Headed Serpent in the *Cantigas de Santa María*: Sin, Sex, and Color in Late Medieval Castile." *Gesta* 55.2 (2016): 213-237.
- Phillips, William D. *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2014.
- Ramey, Lynn. *Black Legacies: Race and the European Middle Ages*. Gainesville: University Press Florida, 2014.
- Ray, Jonathan. "Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval 'Convivencia.'" *Jewish Social Studies* 11.2 (2005): 1-18.
- Remensnyder, Amy. "Christian Captives, Muslim Maidens, and Mary." *Speculum* 82.3 (2007), 642-677.
- *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Rueda, Antonio M. "From Bozal to Mulata: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Black Female Slave in Early Modern Spanish Theater." *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 5.2 (2017): 87-110.
- Salicrú I Lluch, Roser. "De Quan els Esclaus No Eren (Només) Negres Africans: A l'entorn de l'es Clavitud i del Tràfic D'esclaus a la Mediterrània Tardomedieval des de L'observatori Barceloní." *Drassana* 25 (2017): 52-65.
- Scarborough, Connie. *Women in Thirteenth-Century Spain as Portrayed in Alfonso X's Cantigas de Santa María*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1993.
- Silleras-Fernández, Núria. "Nigra Sum Sed Formosa: Black Slaves in the Court of a Fourteenth-Century Aragonese Queen." *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007): 546-565.
- Strickland, Debra Higgs. *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Verlinden, Charles. *L'Esclavage dans l'Europe Médiévale. Vol. 1: Péninsule Iberique-France*. Bruges: De Tempel, 1955.
- Winer, Rebecca Lynn. "Conscripting the Breast: Lactation, Slavery, and Salvation in the Realms of Aragon and Kingdom of Majorca, c. 1250-1300." *Journal of Medieval History* 34 *Quimbandas* 1/1 (December 2020)

(2008): 164-184.

Zaid, Rhona. "The Muslim/Mudejar in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X, el Sabio." *Sharq Al-Andalus* 4
(1987): 145-152.

Belle da Costa Greene, Book History, Race, and Medieval Studies¹

By Dorothy Kim

Abstract: Linking both Harris’s opening to “Whiteness as Property” and Kendall’s opening in *Hood Feminism* to reexamine and position the details of Belle da Costa Greene’s family and her mother’s decision to move herself and her children across the color line, this essay situates Greene, her family, her career, and her personal book collection in contrast to her roles as the first librarian, first director, and person-in-charge of the acquisitions and the shapings of the Pierpont Morgan library. The article first discusses the complexities of “White Heritage as Property” and considers how manuscript and rare books collecting is another way to make white supremacist monuments of the “western civilization” past. The second part of the article addresses Belle da Costa Greene’s personal manuscript collection, her formulation of herself in relation to Black Orientalism, and the practices of manuscript cataloging. Finally, the essay ends with an argument about how we can make racial and social reparations through various means, including manuscript cataloging, in order to do justice to Belle da Costa Greene’s work and professional importance.

Cheryl I. Harris opens her article, “Whiteness as Property,” with a passage from the US court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and proceeds to tell a personal narrative about her grandmother in the era of Jim Crow. She writes:

In the 1930s, some years after my mother’s family became part of the great river of Black migration that flowed north, my Mississippi-born grandmother was confronted with the harsh matter of economic survival for herself and her two daughters. Having separated from my grandfather, who himself was trapped on the fringes of economic marginality, she took one long hard look at her choices and presented herself for employment at a major retail store in Chicago’s central business district. This decision would have been unremarkable for a white woman in similar circumstances, but for my grandmother, it was an act of both great daring and self-denial, for in so doing she was presenting herself as a white woman. In the parlance of racist America, she was “passing.” (Harris 1710)

The subsequent paragraphs detail the daily encounters Harris’s grandmother had with her white co-workers and customers, and the emotional turmoil and exhaustion that “great daring and self-denial” generated within her. “The fact that self-de-

¹I would like to thank Tarrell Campbell for inviting me to be the Keynote for the Belle Da Costa Greene Conference in December 2018. The bulk of my initial work in the Pierpont Morgan came in November 2018 in a series of all-day trips to the library. My thanks to the Pierpont Morgan Library, particularly Christine Nelson (Druze Heinz Curator) and Joshua O’Driscoll (Assistant Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts), and to the Morgan Library staff for pulling Belle da Costa Greene’s probate documents and will from the NY City Clerk’s office. I also delivered a version of this talk at the invitation of the Beinecke Library on a roundtable on women book collectors in November 2019.

Dorothy Kim teaches Medieval Literature at Brandeis University. Her research focuses on race, gender, digital humanities, medieval women’s literary cultures, medievalism, Jewish/Christian difference, book history, digital media, and the alt-right.

nial had been a logical choice and had made her complicit in her own oppression at times fed the fire in her eyes when she confronted some daily outrage inflicted on Black people” (1711-12). This personal history, according to Harris,

[...] illustrates the valorization of whiteness as treasured property in a society structured on racial caste. In ways, too embedded that it is rarely apparent, the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the status of being white have become a valuable asset that whites sought to protect and that those who passed sought to attain—by fraud if necessary. Whites have come to expect and rely on these benefits, and over time these expectations have been affirmed, legitimated, and protected by the law. Even though the law is neither uniform nor explicit in all instances, in protecting settled expectations based on white privilege, American law has recognized a property interest in whiteness that, although unacknowledged, now forms the background against which legal disputes are framed, argued, and adjudicated. (1713-14)

I open with Harris’s discussion of her grandmother’s passing as well as her arguments about “whiteness as property” for two reasons. First, to present how whiteness and property are “entangled” and, in the era of Jim Crow, deeply embedded in law and in the lives of everyday Black men and women. Second, to highlight Harris’s centering of intersectionality by foregrounding the actual lived issues and experiences of her grandmother, a poor Black woman fighting to keep herself, along with members of her family, financially solvent in Jim Crow America.²

Published almost two decades later, Mikki Kendall’s book, *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women the Movement Forgot*, also opens with a discussion of her grandmother, who “would not have described herself as a feminist. Born in 1924, after white women won the right to vote, but raised in the height of Jim Crow America, she did not think of white women as allies or sisters” (Kendall ix). I invoke Kendall’s work here because she makes a similarly salient point about intersectionality and the lives of Black women that she sees exemplified in her family’s history:

We rarely talk about basic needs as a feminist issue. Food insecurity and access to quality education, safe neighborhoods, a living wage, and medical care are all feminist issues. Instead of a framework that focuses on helping women get basic needs met, all too often the focus is not on survival but on increasing privilege. For a movement that is meant to represent all women, it often centers on those who already have most of their needs met as a feminist issue. As with most, if not all, marginalized women who function as feminist actors in their community even when they don’t use the terminology, my feminism is rooted in an awareness of how race and gender and class all affect my ability to be educated, receive medical care, gain and keep employment, as well as how those things can sway authority figures in their treatment of me. (xiii)

Both of these Black feminist scholars and their works’ opening family histories help to situate Belle da Costa Greene, her family, her career, and her personal book collection in contrast to her role as first librarian, first director, and the one in charge of the acquisitions and the shaping of the Pierpont Morgan library. Her parents were well known; in the case of her father, politically prominent; in the case of her mother, from members of well-established Black families who “worked in higher-status professions as engineers, barbers, music teachers, and printers” (Ardizzone 27). Her father, Richard Theodore Greener, was the first Black graduate of Harvard University;³ taught at the University of South Carolina and was head librarian (though was driven out); obtained a law degree, and became Dean of Howard University’s law department. He was eventually dispatched to Vladivostok as a diplomat, or “Commercial Agent,” of the United States.

²See Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991), 1241-299, doi:10.2307/1229039. Also “The Combahee River Collective Statement,” published April 1977, accessed October 29, 2020, <https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective-statement.html>

³Michael David Cohen, “Richard Greener: First Black Graduate of Harvard University,” *African American Intellectual*

Belle's mother, Genevieve Ida Fleet, "had been part of a stable community of free people of color in Georgetown and then Washington D.C., for most of the nineteenth century" (27). By the time he departed for Vladivostok, Greener had left his wife and five children living at the same address where they had moved in the late 1880s, 29 West 99th Street. This location was, according to Greene's biographer Heidi Ardizzone, part of a "largely white area just west of Central Park, far north of the Tenderloin district and south of Harlem. Native-born New Yorkers, Germans, Scandinavians, Irish, Canadians, and white migrant Americans lived in multifamily dwellings [...] It was a solidly working-class, lower-middle-class neighborhood" (45). When Belle da Costa Greene's mother made the decision to have her family pass as white, which seemed to have solidified by 1900, they were still at this official address though under the name "Green/Greene" instead of Greener on the census (53).

I am linking to both Harris's opening to "Whiteness as Property" and Kendall's opening in *Hood Feminism* to reexamine and situate the details of Belle da Costa Greene's family and her mother's decision to move herself and her children across the color line. Her background as an African American woman connected to prominent Black families and the complexities of passing matter to her work at the Pierpont Morgan Library and also to her own personal collecting histories. Like the grandmothers of Harris and Kendall, Belle da Costa Greene grappled with the tightening vise of Jim Crow, and racial passing was a constant in their lives and in the lives of their family members.

Drawing on Kendall's discussion of basic needs, we cannot separate this priority and drive in da Costa Greene's personal collection choices. Belle da Costa Greene's family—and particularly her mother—struggled with the basic need issues of survival after the separation of Richard and Genevieve. Though her mother's family would be considered part of a nascent nineteenth-century Black professional and free artisanal class, and her father's education and political prominence gave him access to lofty social and financial circles, the moment when Genevieve Ida Fleet made the decision for her entire family to pass was rooted in the issue of familial financial solvency. I am highlighting this to underscore that for Belle da Costa Greene, no matter what passing as white would eventually allow her to access in terms of financial resources, cultural privilege, and white privilege, her life and her work always was in service to the financial support, needs, and resources of her family until her death.

Even though Richard T. Greener was a prominent political figure, this did not mean that he and his family members were financially secure. In fact, the institutions that offered him these positions often found ways to avoid paying him because he was a Black man. For example, according to Ardizzone's biography, "to recover from his debt and pull himself out of the financial tailspin he had been in since he was denied his back pay from the University of South Carolina," Greener left his family behind to take a job in New York as secretary of the Grant Monument Association (40-41). Genevieve Ida Fleet, Belle da Costa Greene's mother, stayed in Washington D.C. and moved in with her family. Even though her father would acquire another extra job—"on the Municipal Civil Service Examining Board,"—"bad investments" would make his hope for "financial stability" difficult (43). Thus, even as Greener changed positions to support his family and acquired extra work to try to settle his debts, the family remained in a state of financial precarity.

Harris references Gunnar Myrdal's work in *An American Dilemma* (1944) that describes the phenomenon of "passing" in relation to racial "caste" and also specifically about Black

History Society, published October 4 2018, accessed Nov 13, 2020, <https://www.aaihs.org/richard-greener-first-black-graduate-of-harvard-college/>.

women, class, and focusing primarily on clerical and white-collar professions that would not have been open to Black women and men without this “passing.” Myrdal also discusses the phenomenon of “professionally” passing while identifying as Black in their private lives and networks. Though it is unclear how much Belle da Costa Greene’s family revealed to close personal and familial circles, as I have discussed earlier, they did not change addresses when they officially cemented their racial passing in the census.⁴ They would pass as a family for the rest of da Costa Greene’s life and her skills in acquiring manuscripts, rare books, and artworks would also allow her to amass a personal collection specifically geared toward long-term financial stability. In this way, Belle da Costa Greene’s private collection was always directed at one of the chief benefits of racial passing and “whiteness as property”: intergenerational wealth. It is fitting, then, that we see the logics and reasons behind Belle da Costa Greene’s private collection outlined so clearly in the documentary form that most exemplifies the frames of Harris’s “Whiteness as Property”: da Costa Greene’s will and probate assessment.⁵

This article will first discuss the complexities of “White Heritage as Property” and will consider how manuscript and rare books collecting was another way to make white supremacist monuments of the “western civilization” past. The second part of the article will address Belle da Costa Greene’s personal manuscript collection, her formulation of herself in relation to Black Orientalism, and the practices of manuscript cataloging. Finally, I will end with an argument about how we can make racial and social reparations through various means, including manuscript cataloging, in order to do justice to Belle da Costa Greene’s work and professional importance.

Collecting the Past: White Heritage as Property

Eunsong Kim’s forthcoming book, *The Politics of Collecting: Property and Race in Aesthetic Formation* (Duke University Press) discusses Harris’s “Whiteness as Property” in the world of art, aesthetics, museums, and libraries in the twentieth century.⁶ In examining their financial infrastructures and systems, she highlights the explicit whiteness that undergirds and supports the logics of these cultural, art, and library institutions. Belle da Costa Greene was the first librarian and director of the Pierpont Morgan Library. She was also the main acquisitions agent whose “highly critical judgement” would have a profound effect on the library’s collection.⁷ Yet, there has been no reckoning with Belle da Costa Greene’s multi-axis situatedness in relation to her racial, gendered, and sexuality status.⁸ Often scholars have noted Belle da Costa Greene’s specific discussions of finances in regards to manuscript acquisition for the Morgan Library. Some scholars have pointed to a letter she writes in the 1930s after the Wall Street stock market crash that her careful financial stewardship over acquisitions was also specifically about the basic needs of the staff: “it is not possible for Mr. Morgan to spend any considerable sum of money at this time [...]. Confidentially, the situation in this country is more than serious, and it is an actual fact that every penny that can be spared must be used to feed and employ destitute people” (Cleaver and Magnusson 69). This is a specific example that shows how da Costa Greene’s multi-axis situatedness, the lens of intersectionality, specifically affected her collecting habits and the contexts in which she thought to collect both for the Morgans and herself.

⁴Heidi Ardizzone pointed this out to me at the conference, Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field.

⁵Belle Da Costa Greene, Will and Probate.

⁶Early work on this topic can be found in Eunsong Kim, “Appraising Newness: Whiteness, Neoliberalism and the Building of the Archive for New Poetry,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* vol. 1, no. 2 (2017), 1-40, <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.38>.

⁷Laura Cleaver, and Danielle Magnusson, “American Collectors and the Trade in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts in London, 1919–1939: J.P. Morgan Junior, A. Chester Beatty, and Bernard Quaritch Ltd.,” in *Collecting the Past: British Collectors and*

This article, then, also considers Harris's formulation of whiteness as property in the context of book history and rare books collection, specifically the idea of "connoisseurship" that intersects with what I would term "white heritage as property."⁹ As Harris explains:

Through this entangled relationship between race and property, historical forms of domination have evolved to reproduce subordination in the present. [...] whiteness and property share a common premise—a conceptual nucleus—of a right to exclude. Following the period of slavery and conquest, white identity became the basis of racialized privilege that was ratified and legitimated in law as a type of status property. (Harris 1714)

While da Costa Greene's personal collection utilized her "white identity" in order to provide financial stability to her extended family, her publicly lauded acquisitions on behalf of the Morgan Library fulfilled to the letter the ideal of "white heritage as property" (Louchheim x8). Danielle Christmas's theorization of "white heritage politics" has been primarily discussed in relation to Confederate monuments, but my interest here is in exploring how those politics can also be found in the act of assembling and collecting the past.¹⁰ Lyra Monteiro recently discussed the complexities of "heritage politics" and the intersection of "whiteness as property" in discussing American architecture and its reference to the classical past. Building on the work of David Lowenthal, she links heritage to inheritance, which,

[...] in turn, invokes the investment of western capitalist culture in the passage of property from a presumptively male property holder to his (legitimate) lineal descendants.

Similarly, the romance language terms for "heritage"—"patrimonio" in Spanish—directly invoke the property of the father. And another term that commonly appears both in the contexts of wills and of heritage is "legacy." In other words: our model of "heritage"—whether familial, national, or world—is about descent-based ownership of a particular slice of the past.

The Western concept of heritage is thus inherently one of possession. In order for one person to own something, they must have rights to it that others do not have. When that heritage is materialized in public space, it also conveys a sense of ownership rights over that public space. Indeed, the materialization of white heritage has been one of the primary mechanisms of upholding white supremacy since the founding era of the United States.¹¹

The Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum in New York City and its collection precisely fit into Monteiro's description of "the materialization of white heritage" as a form of white supremacy. Belle da Costa Greene was an exemplary acquisitions agent who constructed a white heritage collection for the agenda of white, American industrialists. Though originally a private collection, it became a public space for those within New York City to observe the literary, historical, and art historical monuments of the past. In this way, the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum

Their Collections from the 18th to the 20th Centuries, ed. Toby Burrows and Cynthia Johnston (Routledge, 2018), 67.

⁸The exception is Greene's rumored bisexuality, which is discussed in Ardizzone's biography.

⁹See Danielle Christmas's formulation of "White Heritage Politics" in her forthcoming chapter "From Heritage Politics to Hate: Neo-Confederate Novels & White Protectionism," in *Building an Architecture of Peace in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield). The abstract is published on her website at <https://daniellechristmas.com/2018/08/10/book-chapter-from-heritage-politics-to-hate-neo-confederate-novels-white-protectionism/>.

¹⁰Danielle Christmas, "From Neo-Confederate Narrative to Heritage Politics" (Conference Paper, Modern Language Association Annual Convention, Chicago, IL, January 3-6, 2019).

¹¹Lyra D. Monteiro, "Power Structures: White Columns, White Marble, White Supremacy," Medium.com, posted Oct 27, 2020, accessed on 30 October 2020, <https://intersectionist.medium.com/american-power-structures-white-columns-white-marble-white-supremacy-d43aa091b5f9>. See also David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 31. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nj0w1mp>.

fulfills what archive studies and library studies have discussed as an issue of whiteness. If white heritage is about “the descent-based ownership of a particular slice of the past,” the “legacy” or “patrimony” that da Costa Greene acquired is one that unquestionably upholds Western European ideals of white supremacy.

Archivist Mario H. Ramirez has observed that “whiteness and white identity developed as the direct products of American expansionism and capitalist ambition, and as a means of justifying the moral and cultural exceptionalism of whites” (Ramirez 342). Likewise, Todd Honma characterizes whiteness as “an invisible and elusive structure of privilege, one that allows for constant reinvention and re-articulation to protect the interests of a white ruling class” (Honma 5). Both of these points are exemplified in the collection and building of John Pierpont Morgan’s library.

The extension of nineteenth-century belief in “Anglo-Saxon” racial supremacy and the investment and collection of Western European “great books” and “art” mimicked the gentleman’s libraries of the high European aristocracy. This enshrinement of a monument to “White Heritage as Property” also, ironically, poached these items from the gentlemen’s libraries of the waning European aristocracy to such an extent that political cartoons and “moral panic” centered on European nationalism worked to engender laws to prevent European “heritage” from being taken to North America.¹² We know what kinds of items da Costa Greene collected for the Morgan. In 1949, The Morgan Library organized “A Retrospective Exhibition in Honour of Belle da Costa Greene” that pulled the most exemplary pieces of what she had acquired in the twenty-five years of the library’s run.¹³ This exhibition included all the major Western authors, artists, and important historical figures in the Morgan’s collection.

But what does it mean to collect these “white heritage monuments” of the Western European past? David Watt describes “white heritage politics” (though not the term) to address the nature of medieval manuscript collection in Canada, explaining:

This volume highlights some of the medieval manuscripts available in Canada, yet the acquisition of these manuscripts must also be understood as part of a broader cultural process of superimposing a European past onto the present of a settler colony. Ultimately, then, the essays in this volume show that when we study manuscripts in Canada, we are not only studying European manuscript culture of the Middle Ages but also the perception of that culture by those collecting and studying manuscripts here. (Watt 2)

He explains that there were several reasons why manuscripts were collected and given to Canadian universities and libraries (religious, pedagogical, etc.). But there is a common thread: the idea of “western civilization.” Watt explains that for one librarian:

the pedagogical benefit of the books in the Dysart Collection was more closely bound to their cultural significance than their economic value. He notes that “[t]he material is of superb quality and illustrates the place of the book as the instrument of civilized thought through many centuries of Western civilization.” [The] repetition of “civilized” and “civilization” in this sentence suggests that he saw [the] acquisition of books made in Europe as part of the process of translating Western cultural values to the Canadian west. (7)

Watt also includes the example of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire funding the purchase of several manuscripts for the University of Saskatchewan, thus linking Canada’s political connections to the British Empire to this cultural project. This group was explicitly framed as “an

¹²A bulk of discussions in Cleaver and Magnusson’s article addresses this. You can see one such cartoon on pg. 64.

¹³Lawrence C. Wroth, ed. *The First Quarter Century of the Pierpont Morgan Library: a Retrospective Exhibition In Honor of Belle Da Costa Greene*. (Pierpont Morgan Library, 1949).

organization of women devoted to encouraging imperialism” (“Imperial Order”).

I would like to point to the gendered nature of this manuscript boosterism as relates purposes for the development of a white supremacist North American empire. In this way, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire is akin to the Mississippi Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy who helped raise the money to erect the Confederate monument in Oxford, Mississippi in 1907 (Neff, et al.). These organizations of white women that uphold white supremacy, “western civilization,” and help to acquire and/or to erect monuments to a white western past represent exactly what I call “white heritage as property” and what Lyra Monteiro discusses in relation to legacy, heritage, and, in this case, gendered women’s legacy.

Archive Stories

The year 2020 marks the seventy-first anniversary of Belle da Costa Greene’s official retirement from her position as director and chief librarian at the Morgan. Along with being one of the first women and the first Black fellow of the Medieval Academy of America, she was also probably the first Black woman to be a member of the College Art Association and The American Library Association (she actually gave a keynote in 1912, after refusing to do so for a number of years). And, she helped steer, and became, an early consultant to a number of other illustrious institutions—the Frick, the Walters Art Gallery, the Dumbarton Oaks Library, etc. (“Greene, Belle da Costa”). But it all starts with the archive—her archive—the Morgan Library’s archive, and my own archive story.¹⁴

In an incredibly cold late March of 2005, I spent a week at the Morgan to look at manuscripts for my dissertation. The Morgan reading room was at the time in the basement/vault area of the J. P. Morgan Chase building on Park Avenue between 47th and 48th streets. In this way, the indelible experience of working with the manuscript collection at the Morgan is always intertwined with American capitalism, neoliberalism, and the midtown financial district. The worlds of neoliberal capitalism are always front and center as relates the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum as well as in the Morgan’s archive and manuscript catalog. On my visit to the library in November 2018, after renovation of the original site, I noticed that you could not leave the library without seeing images of the Morgans in portraits (particularly Pierpont and Jack Morgan), as well as a display on the lower-level wall (where the bathrooms are located) that tells the history of the library and its building.

As of November 2018, there is a tiny section on this wall that explains that Belle da Costa Greene was the first librarian and director of the Pierpont Morgan Library. However, this placard made no reference to the fact that she was Black. Though we know that Greene was Black, that her close friends likely also knew, and that many in her collector circles suspected she might be

¹⁴I draw here on the model of Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Duke University Press, 2006).

¹⁵“During Greene’s tenure at the Morgan Library, which lasted over forty years, it was privately speculated that Greene was of African American descent” (Ardizzone, 2007; Secrest, 1979; Strouse, 1999a). Meryle Secrest, (1979) in her biography of art critic Bernard Berenson, recounted that Mrs. Ann Lyon Haight, who planned to pen Greene’s biography, thought it highly likely that Greene and her family had “crossed the color bar” (p. 290). Haight had been a co-member with Greene in the Hroswitha Club, which was a female bibliophilic organization founded in New York in 1944 to encourage the discussion of books and book collecting (Abraham, 2001). And, as early as 1909, Isabella Stewart Gardner, a formidable art collector, wrote in a private letter to Bernard Berenson that Greene, “is a half-breed” (Hadley, 1987; Strouse, 1999a, p. 518). See Stephanie Danette Smith, “Passing Shadows: Illuminating the Veiled Legacy of Belle da Costa Greene,” (Dissertation, Dominion University Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 2015), 59. She references Meryle Secrest, *Being Bernard Berenson: A Biography* (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1979); Jean Strouse, *Morgan: American Financier* (Random House, 1999); Mildred Abraham, “The Spirit of ’76: The First Women of the Grolier Club,” *Gazette of the Grolier Club* New Series, 52 (2001): 31-48; and Rollin

Black,¹⁵ the descriptions and discussions of her in reference works and public pieces (including the walls of the Pierpont Morgan Museum itself) continued to whitewash her. For instance, the *Grove Online Art* entry published in 2003 does not identify her as Black, despite updating the bibliography in 2015 to include Heidi Ardizzone's biography ("Greene, Belle da Costa"). Nor did the *Dictionary of American Biography* connect Belle da Costa Greene with her father, Richard Greener, the first Black graduate of Harvard, until after 1999 (Gennari-Santori 1-2).

But this racial erasure, this whitewashing, does not just happen in external articles and reference materials. It also happens in the Morgan Library's own catalogues. A parallel to the invisibility of her race on the wall of the Morgan, Belle da Costa Greene is also not searchable under the term African American. If you search in *Corsair*, the online portal for the Morgan's collection, you will find 172 entries, mostly from later acquisitions related to the Carter Burden collection of American Literature assembled in the 1960s and 1970s. Belle da Costa Greene's name appears only once, in the entry for Ardizzone's biography. Otherwise, she is not marked as Black or African American. You can find thousands of entries in *Corsair* under her name. But again, it is only through Ardizzone's biography that the digital catalog and its information system and metadata have allowed da Costa Greene to be raced.

Since my visit in November 2018, the Morgan Library has updated its system to log in more entries under Belle da Costa Greene, especially fine tuning which items were originally part of her personal collection. In addition, they acquired a bust of Belle da Costa Greene in 2018, now on display in East Room, and added a section about her to their website ("The Morgan's First"). After Tarrell Campbell organized *Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field at Saint Louis University*¹⁶ in 2018, the Morgan announced The Belle da Costa Greene Curatorial Fellowships, which will go to two members of underrepresented communities for special collections curatorship at the library.¹⁷ Around the same time, organized and promoted by the Medievalists of Color, the Medieval Academy of America also endowed an award in Greene's name.¹⁸ Since then, her place as a Black woman librarian, medievalist, bibliographer, and director has gained more visibility and discussion.

But this is not just a bug in the digital catalog system, it is also a feature in the manuscript catalog. The medieval manuscript catalog of the Morgan Museum is organized using a letter to specify the collection, followed by a number. The bulk of the library's medieval manuscripts are under the letter M, for Morgan. Some of the other collections in the library are designated by different letters (B, H, etc), most likely because a separate shelfmark designation was mandated in the bequest. Overall, this exemplifies a larger tendency within manuscript studies to center the patron/the money in the organization of primary materials.

Belle da Costa Greene's personal collection of manuscripts, early books, antique jewellery, and art were never meant to be donated to a library or museum as a mark of "white heritage as property." She amassed this collection with the intention of selling individual pieces in order to provide financial stability for her family. However, Greene's will was executed on July 13, 1936 and many of the family members to whom she left bequests, predeceased her.¹⁹ She died on May 10, 1950, and

Van N. Hadley, *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Isabella Stewart Gardner 1887- 1924* (Northeastern University Press, 1987).

¹⁶Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field, Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO, November 30-December 2, 2018, <https://belledacostagreeneconference.weebly.com>

¹⁷"Fellowships," The Morgan Library, accessed November 2020, <https://www.themorgan.org/opportunities/fellowships>

¹⁸"The Belle da Costa Greene Award," Medieval Academy of America, accessed November 2020, <https://www.medievalacademy.org/page/GreeneAward>

¹⁹Belle da Costa Greene, will dated July 13, 1936, probate petition dated May 10, 1950, decree dated June 23, 1950, photocopy in the reference collection at the Morgan Library, New York, NY, call number 900.9 G795 L34. Original preserved at the New York County Surrogate's Court.

what she had worked for so many decades to achieve, to put her family members in sound financial footing and to generate the most elusive of African American goals—intergenerational family assets and wealth—became a moot point. In the end, her brother, one estranged sister, and her niece inherited part of her estate as well as specific items—including some amazing-sounding Cartier jewelry, furs, and a fabulously jeweled bag that spelled Belle out in diamonds.²⁰ She had bequeathed her manuscript and art collection—which included a 6th-century Buddhist statue, several dozen Islamic and Indian manuscripts, and a number of paintings—to her nephew with specific instructions to sell the collection so he could use the proceeds to purchase an annuity and secure his own financial stability. Owing to his death in World War II, however, this collection was left to the Morgan. Her estate, at the time of the will’s assessment on August 22, 1951, was estimated to be worth a little over \$709,029.35—adjusted for inflation, that sum today would be closer to \$7,406,474.92. After all was said and done, the Morgan Library acquired—through the tragedies and deaths in Belle da Costa Greene’s family—a collection worth \$446,700.58 in 1951 and, today, \$4,666,803.78.²¹

Belle da Costa Greene, Race, and Islamic Manuscripts

In the midst of creating a collection for the Morgan Library firmly within the Western European tradition of “white heritage as property,” Greene also convinced the Morgans to purchase several Islamic and Ethiopian manuscripts and works of art (Winslow). The contents of her personal collection reveal not only different goals (financial stability for her family) but a different agenda altogether—one rooted, according to Stephanie Danette Smith, in her racialized identity as a Black woman. Danette Smith’s dissertation, “Passing Shadows: Illuminating the Veiled Legacy of Belle da Costa Greene,” is the first and only scholarly work that uses critical race theory and Library and Information Science to examine Belle da Costa Greene’s career and life. She emphasizes the importance of counternarratives, or “counter-storytelling,” as an integral part of Greene’s history as a librarian (Smith 9). Intersectionality is also central to this reinterpretation “because Greene is Black, female, and a librarian. These aspects of her identity and profession play a unique role in how she handled herself and the choices she made” (13).

I agree with Danette Smith’s argument that CRT is necessary to reevaluate Belle da Costa Greene’s career and work. In particular, her personal collection, funded by her job at the Pierpont Morgan, operates as a form of undercommons that absolutely is an expression of her racialized and gendered situatedness. If we understand that her family’s racial passing and her secure position as the director of the Pierpont Morgan Library gave Belle da Costa Greene refuge in the rarefied white supremacist neoliberal capitalist worlds of libraries and museums, we can imagine a counternarrative that follows the lines sketched by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney regarding the university in the United States:

But for the subversive intellectual, all of this goes on upstairs, in polite company, among the rational men. After all, the subversive intellectual came under false pretenses, with bad documents, out of love. Her labor is as necessary as it is unwelcome. The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And on top of all that, she disappears. She disappears into the underground, the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university, into the *undercommons of enlightenment*, where the work gets done, where the work gets subverted, where the revolution is still black, still strong. (Moten and Harney 25)

Additionally, when compared to other Black women librarians in New York City between 1900

²⁰Belle Da Costa Greene, Probate Document.

²¹Calculations are my own, and reflect inflation data from December 2018.

and 1950, it is clear that if Belle da Costa Greene had made her career as a Black woman, she would never have been able to access the rare books world in which she built her professional reputation. As Danette Smith explains, most Black female librarians during Greene's lifetime "were often limited to public library work and were restricted in the collections they were allowed to handle," making the light-skinned Greene a notable exception (Smith 66). Regina Anderson Andrews, for instance, faced blatant discrimination when applying for a job at the New York Public Library in 1923, as described by Ethelene Whitmire:

'I'm American,' Regina Anderson wrote in 1923 on her application for a position [...] when asked to give her race. Three or four days after she completed the application at the main branch on 42nd Street [...] Anderson was told, 'You're not an American. You're not White' [...] The NYPL hired Anderson, but because of her color, her interviewer told her, 'We'll have to send you to Harlem.' (Whitmire 409)

As Harris observes, "the possessors of whiteness were granted the legal right to exclude others from the privileges inhering in whiteness," and we can see this demonstrated in the cases of two Black women librarians, one of whom passed, and the other of whom did not (Harris 1736).

Scholars have attributed Greene's interests in Asian and Islamic art, in part, to her relationship with Bernard Berenson (who helped found the Villa i Tatti) and a 1910 Islamic Art exhibition that she attended with him in Munich (Winslow). Additionally, Karen Winslow identifies da Costa Greene's European "orientalist" interests in the East and "the exotic persona she created for herself by claiming Portuguese ancestry," pointing in particular to Laura Coombs Hills's miniature portrait of Greene dressed as an 'Egyptian'.²² However, I would like to contextualize Belle da Costa Greene's interests in identifying as Egyptian and collecting Islamic and African manuscripts and art with a more complicated history of African American investments and interests in the Egyptian past that often had complex gender and sexuality dynamics. Regarding the Coombs Hill portrait, Ardizzone writes:

What Belle sent Bernard to console him was a photograph of a miniature portrait that the Boston artist Laura Coombs Hills had begun that April. Although Hills initially wanted Belle to pose sitting on a leopard skin, which Belle thought was a horrible idea, the final pose was standing wrapped in a "wonderful glowing Saffron" veil. The vivid sunset colors of pink-salmon and orange were the "whole value" of the portrait, Belle thought. She regretted that she could send Bernard only a black-and-white photograph of it. She wanted him to see it because it portrayed a Belle he did not yet know, but he would some day: "the Belle of one of my former incarnations 'Egyptienne'." [...] Belle's mother reportedly had a very different view of what "incarnation" the portrait evoked. The story is told that she said it made Belle look like a hussy. (Ardizzone 170-71)

Da Costa Greene regularly discussed and identified with Egypt. She wrote in a letter to Berenson: "I know that I was an Egyptian princess...in one of my former incarnations. I am simply soaked with the love of it [Egypt], the joy and despair of it and the ever-increasing mystery of it. Someday I am going there to live and I doubt if I shall ever come back" (163). In nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America, supporters of both white exceptionalism and Black culture laid claim to Ancient Egypt. The former saw it as the twin of American empire by whitewashing it; the latter "identified Egypt as African, and as an example of the ability of Africans to build a civilization to rival those of Europe and the United States" (163).

²²Winslow, "Belle da Costa Greene." A digitized version of this image can be found on the Morgan's website at <https://www.themorgan.org/objects/item/214115>.

The description of her portrait and the account of the sitting itself indicates that Hills wished to set Belle da Costa Greene up as a version of Cleopatra. The leopard skin, or a wild animal skin, is a frequent visual reference in nineteenth-century images of Cleopatra (Trafton 165-221).²³ Da Costa Greene chose instead to flirt with the ambiguity of her Egyptian image through her choice of the “sunset”-colored veil. This represents what Ardizzone describes as another “attempt to play with, cover, reveal, and question her own racial identity” (Ardizzone 163). I would argue that this portrait, and Greene’s interest in describing herself as Egyptian, is coded to identify her as racially Black, if not mixed-race in the tradition of nineteenth-century visions of Egypt and Cleopatra. This post-1865 image of Egypt is exemplified in the Egyptian Court of the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, that included a sculpture of Cleopatra by Black lesbian artist Edmonia Lewis, and the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago (1893), featuring a “re-creation of the Temple of Luxor” (Trafton 3).



Miniature Portrait of Belle da Costa Greene in Egyptian Costume, ca. 1910 by Laura Coombs Hill. Watercolor on Ivory. 146 x 108 mm, oval. Bequest of Belle da Costa Greene, 1950. The Morgan Library and Museum. Accession Number: AZ164.

Belle da Costa Greene’s longing to travel and to live in Egypt fits into a long history of nineteenth-century Black Orientalism. This history included Frederick Douglass (a colleague of Richard T. Greener), David Dorr, who wrote *A Colored Man Round the World* (1858), and Edward Wilmot Blyden, whose *West Africa to Palestine* (1873) would be “one of the clearest expressions of nineteenth-century vindicationist Afrocentrism ever written, made all the more so due to Blyden’s physical visit to the Great Pyramid” (20-21;23). According to Trafton,

like all Orientalisms, black Orientalism—derived from African journeys like those of Douglass, spiritualist theories like those of Randolph, painterly historicism like that of Henry Ossawa Tanner, biblical figuralism like that of the countless black Christians, and speculative Egyptology like that Martin Delany [...] is a radically heterogeneous discourse, made up of what Lisa Lowe calls “the nonequivalence of various orientalisms.” (Trafton 26)²⁴

Trafton concludes that “to construct the black Orient was to construct the black self” (27). For

²³See also, Kelly J. Gotschalk “The Seated Cleopatra in Nineteenth Century American Sculpture,” M.A. Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1997.

²⁴Trafton quotes Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 27.

Belle da Costa Greene, this portrait and her direction in its painting represent a complex discussion about her Blackness in dialogue with an equally complex set of genealogies and references that Trafton describes as the history of the “American Cleopatra.” He contextualizes Edmonia Lewis’s marble sculpture of Cleopatra as “a radical intervention” and “a primary example of the destabilizing maneuvers enacted by African Americans around representations of ancient Egypt” (165). Her iconography and image were contested sites that

[m]ade her perfect for inclusion in the explosive debates over her character that so concerned the nineteenth century. Plainly visible, whether clothed or unclothed, the body of Cleopatra was a battlefield. [...] Whiteness and blackness are veiled and unveiled, just like Cleopatra’s breasts; they are signs of abjection, empowerment, disgust, and allurements, just like Cleopatra. (174)

Visually, the Hills portrait works through this complexity by staking out its reference to the ongoing history of Cleopatra images and participating in the iconography of Cleopatra as a site of “racial ambiguity, social deviation, and sexual inversion” (176). However, da Costa Greene’s directions in this portrait (most notably her rejection of an animal skin) also subverts this history. It is a nuanced image that side-steps the heavy-handed visuality of gendered Orientalism as described by Trafton:

Orientalist painting utilized two major strategies of racial representation, especially in terms of female objectification or erotic display. The first relied on the ethnographic portraiture of carefully rendered “Oriental” types, often stripped bare and colored with the palette of the mixed and multiracial Other: brown, tan, honey, beige [...] the second mode of Orientalist representation relied on the dynamics of contrast: starkly white bodies placed next to deeply black bodies, both often nude and almost entirely erotically charged. (194)

What we see is da Costa Greene carefully situating herself within this iconographic and textual history through her use of drapery. Instead of being partly exposed, as Cleopatra often is in Western European iconography, Greene is completely wrapped in the orange-salmon-colored veil—but its transparency is nonetheless evident from her pose. This transparency of the veil correlates to what Edmonia Lewis did with her Cleopatra sculpture. There is no other person in this image. In this way, she is delicately subverting the iconographic nuances of the history of the racially ambiguous Cleopatra. While da Costa Greene may see Cleopatra as an exemplar, by toning down the visual tropes and by consistently discussing herself as “Egyptian” without specifically referencing Cleopatra, this portrait reveals a complexity in her understanding of race in America as well as her vision of herself in relation to race, gender, and even sexuality. To send the image of the portrait with the note to Berenson, I would argue, reveals that, as two professionals in the art and library worlds, they are both aware of the context of this image in relation to the iconographic histories of recent American and European art, sculpture, and painting. Conversely, her mother’s objection to the portrait as showing Belle da Costa Greene as a “hussy” may speak to the danger of engaging so directly with Cleopatra’s racial ambiguity.

In addition, I propose that the world of African American literature—in the households of both her father, the well-connected political agent, librarian, and lawyer, and her mother’s family of printers, musicians, and artisans—also influenced her understanding of Egyptian women and, especially, Cleopatra. I am thinking of the nineteenth-century literature of Black girlhood that would have been available to da Costa Greene through both her father’s circles and her mother’s Washington D.C. family. In *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century*, Nazera Sadiq Wright discusses Frances Harper’s serial novel *Trial and Triumph* (1888), in which a character refers to the deep historical roots of her people, connecting the young girl with the figure of Cleopatra.”

The character advises:

Learn to act as if you realized that you were born into this world the child of the Ruler of the universe, that this is his world and that you have as much right in it as she has. I think it was Gilbert Haven, a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a man for whose tombstone I do not think America has any marble too white or any laurel too green, who saw on his travels a statue of Cleopatra, which suggested to him this thought, 'I am black, but comely, the sun has looked down upon me, but I will make you who despise me feel that I am your superior.' (Wright 133)

Sadiq Wright allows that Harper is indulging in a bit of poetic license here. Gilbert Haven did see William Wetmore Story's statue of Cleopatra at the British Museum, and in his 1864 book *The Pilgrim's Wallet*, "he wrote about the profound impression seeing an African queen in marble had made upon him: 'I think [the] artist the bravest American except John Brown. He has made a negress the model of America,—an African prophetess the seer of America'" (133).

In Sadiq Wright's reading, Haven drew upon an African past to imagine a future in which racial equality would be a universal truth and in which there would be no barriers between blacks and other races. Harper then repurposed Haven's radical message of racial equality into a call for pure actions: "Annette, I want you to be so noble, true and pure that if everybody should hate you, that no one could despise you" (133). Sadiq Wright contextualizes the use of Cleopatra as an exemplar in Harper's novel by setting it alongside Edmonia Lewis's *Death of Cleopatra*, discussed earlier (134). She also gestures to Frederick Douglass's comparison of his mother to "an image of the Egyptian ruler Ramses drawn from a statue in his 1855 autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*" (135). Thus, Belle da Costa Greene's self-identification as Egyptian and her choice to have a portrait painted of herself as an Egyptian indicates not just a general investment and interest in the Egyptian and Middle Eastern past, but also a more complicated negotiation that uses Black Orientalism to situate herself and her identity as racially ambiguous.

She encouraged both Morgans (John P. and Jack) to acquire Islamic and Eastern manuscripts and art (Ardizzone 275; 416). And in so doing, she made their book and art collection deviate from the standard idea of how art was taught and organized in the disciplinary fields of art history, which still held that Greek and Roman art was superior to Egyptian art. Nineteenth-century German art historians like Ernst Guhl, Gustav Hotho, Franz Kugler, and E.H. Toelken organized the frames of the long history of art from antiquity to the present based on ideas of European racialized aesthetics so that Western European Art became canon: first in the German university curriculum, and eventually in the European and North American curricula derived from it.²⁵ In this way, Greene made the Morgans unintentionally global book and art collectors. Thus, they too ended up supporting a Black American genealogy that saw Egypt and the Middle East as a counternarrative of white European civilization.

Collecting Islamic Manuscript and the Cataloging Undercommons

Greene collected Islamic and Asian art for several decades and seemed particularly drawn to Kufic manuscript leaves. There's an amusing story claiming that she bought some leaves of a Qu'ran in 1926 while drunk (Winslow). However, it has proven incredibly difficult to find a handlist or catalog corresponding to her collection. I have pieced together bits and pieces from *Corsair* searches, a pre-published article, and, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in*

²⁵See Eric Garberson, "Art History in the University: Toelken - Hotho - Kugler," *Journal of Art Historiography* 5 (2011): 1-20A; and "Art History in the University II: Ernst Guhl," *Journal of Art Historiography* 7 (2012): 1-48. See also Alison C. Traweek, "Himmler's Antiquity," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, October 28, 2018, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/himmlers-antiquity/>.

the Pierpont Morgan Library—a catalog of Islamic and Indian manuscripts produced in 1998. And, I had a chance to look through about a dozen of these manuscripts.

Da Costa Greene’s personal collection is an *undercommons*, or counternarrative, collection that specifically hews to her already established racialized identification with Egypt and the Middle East. It is a shadow collection that feels like a maroon commentary on the larger collection that she organized, acquired, and catalogued for the scions of twentieth-century capitalism. We must contend with the fact that her collection was never meant to be left intact within the belly of the Morgan Library. Her collection was meant for utilitarian purposes, as portable wealth for the stability and well-being of her extensive Black family.

Belle da Costa Greene has also left a legible trace throughout her personal manuscripts. The online catalog descriptions of the manuscripts usually mention her as a former owner in the provenance line. The 1998 catalog of Islamic and Indian manuscripts offers a more detailed description than the online portal, and includes Greene in the provenance descriptions. But this catalog also reveals an unusual detail for a number of these Islamic and Indian manuscripts, namely the presence of a separate shelfmark system.



(MS M 844.1, with “B.G. 15.1” encircled, courtesy The Morgan Library and Museum/D. Kim)

You can see this in the manuscripts themselves: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.844.1 “B.G.15.1” (Schmitz et al. 95); MS M.839 “B.G. 5 and two leaves of B.G. 15” (97); MS M.842 “B.G. 11” (98); MS M.844.2 “B.G. 15.2” (98); MS M. 838.7 “B.G.6” (98); MS M. 838.1-6 “B.G.6” (99); MS M 843 “B.G. 10” (100); MS M. 841 “B.G.9” (100); MS M. 846.4a,b “B.G.8” (101); MS M 532, M. 845 “B.G.22” (102); MS M. 846.10a “B.G. 13.1” (104); MS M 846.10b “B.G.13.2” (105); “MS M.835 “B.G.24” (106); MS M. 848 and M. 849 “B.G. 28, 26” (173); MS M. 846.11a,b “B.G. 23” (184); MS M. 847.1-3 “B.G. 27” (39); MS M.846.2 “B.G. 17.1” (67); MS M. 846.3a, b “B.G. 17.2-3” (67); MS M. 846.5 “B.G. 21” (67); MS M.846.6 “B.G.20” (67); MS M. 846.7 “B.G.19” (68); MS M 846.8 “B.G. 18” (68); and, MS M. 846.9 “B.G.12” (68).

Shelfmarks Table

Morgan Call Number	Greene Call Number	Reference in 1998 catalogue
MS M.844.1	B.G.15.1	p. 95
MS M.839	B.G. 5 and two leaves of B.G. 15	p. 97
MS M.842	B.G. 11	p. 98
MS M.844.2	B.G. 15.2	p. 98
MS M. 838.7	B.G. 6	p. 98
MS M. 838.1-6	B.G. 6	p. 99

Morgan Call Number	Greene Call Number	Reference in 1998 catalogue
MS M 843	B.G. 10	p. 100
MS M. 841	B.G. 9	p. 100
MS M. 846.4a,b	B.G. 8	p. 101
MS M 532, M. 845	B.G. 22	p. 102
MS M. 846.10a	B.G. 13.1	p. 104
MS M 846.10b	B.G. 13.2	p. 105
MS M.835	B.G. 24	p. 106
MS M. 848 and M. 849	B.G. 28, 26	p. 173
MS M. 846.11a,b	B.G. 23	p. 184
MS M. 847.1-3	B.G. 27	p. 39
MS M. 846.2	B.G. 17.1	p. 67
MS M. 846.3a, b	B.G. 17.2-3	p. 67
MS M. 846.5	B.G. 21	p. 67
MS M. 846.6	B.G. 20	p. 67
MS M. 846.7	B.G. 19	p. 68
MS M 846.8	B.G. 18	p. 68
MS M. 846.9	B.G. 12	p. 68

What this indicates is that Belle da Costa Greene created her own shelfmark and numbering system for her private collection. This is done in her own hand. And yet, we cannot get a sense of her entire collection because the current digital and paper catalogues have buried or erased this shelfmark system. I am not sure why, unlike other manuscript cataloging systems, we do not see the Morgan shelfmark followed by Olim...B.G. 1 in the catalog description. Despite the presence of her hand marking the manuscripts she owned, she has again disappeared from the record. I think of her penciled-in shelf marks as a version of what Shawn Wen describes as “digital turks,” or the Black and Latinx women who digitize the world’s knowledge of Google books, whose invisible labor powers the refinement of OCR (Wen). In this bibliographic and book history space, we occasionally see them reinsert their visibility into this archive with images of their hands on the page, disrupting the idea of seamless digital machines. Likewise, I think of da Costa Greene’s B.G. shelfmarks as the manual mechanism to write back, leave a trace, mark the manuscript body with her own racialized body in order to disrupt the seamless whiteness in book history.

In his study of enslaved printer Primus Fowle, whose largely invisible printing labor pressed and produced the *New-Hampshire Gazette* in the second half of the eighteenth century, Jonathan Senchyne argues for an approach rooted in materiality. He suggests “a methodological shift toward reading practices capable of making the revenants of Black art and labor visible in the archives of print [...] This approach to reading will privilege the legibility of the most material aspects of material texts” (Senchyne 110). He draws on Joseph McGill’s work on *The Slave Dwelling Project* in which McGill explains how fingerprints in the bricks of plantation houses leave an imprint of the enslaved men and women who made the materials of the built environment. Their labor has left an impression on the physical space that McGill describes as bearing “traces of people and anchors their presence within today’s built environment” (110). Greene’s shelfmarks are very much like Senchyne’s and McGill’s material traces—we can literally see her hand creating a MS series. However, it differs from the invisible labor that Wen and Senchyne discuss because she herself owned and marked her collection with her shelfmark. We see the life and attention of this manuscript owner on the manuscripts themselves.

However, the medieval manuscript catalog, whether online or in print, never identifies

Belle da Costa Greene as a Black manuscript owner. There are multiple erasures happening here. First, there is a disappearing act: there is this erasure, alongside the compounded erasure of her own hand, her own handwriting, and her own organization of her manuscripts made to disappear from the record. Then, there is a racial whitewashing: what appears to have happened from the larger spaces of the institution, to the reference texts that discuss her career, to the structures of the searchable library catalog, to the manuscript catalog is a constant, consistent, and persistent erasure of her race. Even seventy-one years after she retired from the Morgan, and decades after the Civil Rights Era, Greene's race is a persistent lacuna in the record. However, if you understand the frames of library classification this should not surprise you.

Melissa Adler characterizes “systemic violence [as] fundamentally a classification problem,” arguing that “[t]he interrogation of the production of racialized library subjects in relation to one another and in relation to political and social conditions may shed light on the intensely complex problems of racism in the United States today” (Adler 3). She further explains that sections of library classifications were constructed based on “structures that were written in the late 19th and early 20th centuries” and that libraries “have participated in the naturalization of certain racialized assumptions and associations” that persist to this day (5). Her article looks back to the history of the development of different library classification systems and the embedded racialization and lack of presence of racialized bodies in these taxonomies so that they can only flourish as ancillary, added-on, rather than already woven into these systems of organization and classification. “Not only were libraries and schools segregated during the first part of the twentieth century, but the classifications also structured a double-consciousness segregating books by and about African Americans from books on the general population” (26). Again, this is not a bug, but a feature of the system, and one that explains the persistent erasure of Belle da Costa Greene's race despite her long and distinguished career.

I am continually perplexed that despite an ongoing and high-profile discussion of the complete lack of Black art historians, Black art dealers, and Black curators in the art world— particularly compounded by the Black Panther effect²⁶—we have an example of an early Black woman curator, art buyer, and art historian whose Blackness continues to be erased. The institutions closest to Greene—the Morgan Library, the Medieval Academy of America—are slowly beginning to acknowledge her racialized identity, but a larger reassessment of and engagement with her legacy is long overdue. Is there a way through critical archive studies to approach Belle da Costa Greene, the Pierpont Morgan Library, and her collection of manuscripts and push back against epistemic, structural erasure and the replications of whiteness that have haunted critical conversations thus far?

Critical Archival Studies and Reparations

The answer may be found in critical archival studies, a term first proposed by Ricky Punzalan in 2010, but defined in more detail by Michelle Caswell in 2016. Drawing on Horkheimer's definition of critical theory, her definition of critical archival studies:

²⁶See An Paenhuysen, with Jessica Lynne and Taylor Renee Aldridge, “Where Are All the Young Black Art Critics?” *Contemporary And*, published 5 February 2016, <https://www.contemporaryand.com/magazines/where-are-all-the-young-black-art-critics/>; Jessica Lynne and Taylor Renee Aldridge, “Criticism's Blackout,” *Sightlines: Blog of the Walker Art Center*, published June 9, 2015, <https://walkerart.org/magazine/artsblack-where-are-the-black-art-critics>; Tali Ramsey, “White Voices, Black Art: the Search for Black Curators,” *Lowercase Magazine*, published January 30, 2019, <https://www.lowercasemagazine.com/blog/white-voices-black-art>; Victoria L. Valentine, “On the Rise: 47 Curators and Arts Leaders Who Took On New Appointments in 2019,” *CultureType Blog*, posted December 27, 2019, <https://www.culturetype.com/2019/12/27/on-the-rise-47-curators-and-arts-leaders-who-took-on-new-appointments-in-2019/>; for the “Black Panther” effect, see Lise Ragbir, “What *Black Panther* Gets Right About the Politics of Museums,” *Hyperallergic*, Opinion, published March 20, 2018, <https://hyperallergic.com/433650/black-panther-museum-politics/>.

- (1) Explains what is wrong with the current state of archival and recordkeeping practice and research and identifies who can change it and how;
- (2) Posits achievable goals for how archives and recordkeeping practices and research in archival studies can and should change; and,
- (3) Provides norms and strategies and mechanisms for forming such critique. (Caswell)

Tonia Sutherland further identifies scholarship that “addresses gaps and vagaries in the historical record” as a subset of critical archival studies, and Belle da Costa Greene’s situation at the Morgan Library is a striking and timely case study (Sutherland 3). I have explained the problem Caswell describes as regards critical archive studies—namely, that Greene’s racialized identity as a Black woman has been erased from most, if not all, the records. I will now explain my thoughts on approaches to transforming archival practice and research.

What I would like to propose is a version of Melissa Adler’s argument about reparative taxonomies—derived, respectively, from Sutherland’s archival work and Ta-Nehisi Coates’s work on “The Case for Reparations” (16). Can we do a version of reparative archiving? What might that look like? What would it entail, and what could potentially be recovered? For Belle da Costa Greene, I propose it would include organizing (or, more accurately, re-creating) her entire book, manuscript, and art archive as its own catalogue, and designating her shelfmark B.G. as a separate section in the Morgan’s manuscript collection. I believe it would look like an exhibit at the Pierpont Morgan in collaboration with the Schomburg in order to accurately frame Greene’s collection within the context of Black New York. I believe it would also mean the creation of categories for race, gender, sexuality, ability, and geography as part of a way to rewrite the structures of manuscript catalogs as well as the metadata of the Morgan’s internal catalog. I think these things are not only feasible, but a praxis for moving forward. I believe this is necessary now because #BlackArchivesMatter and I hope this article is a first step in this essential, reparative work for racial justice in Medieval Studies.

Works Cited

- Adler, Melissa. “Classification Along the Color Line: Excavating Racism in the Stacks.” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1 (2017): 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i1.17>
- Ardizzone, Heidi. *An Illuminated Life: Belle da Costa Greene’s Journey from Prejudice to Privilege*. Norton, 2007.
- Burton, Antoinette, ed. *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*. Duke University Press, 2006.
- Caswell, Michelle. “Owning Critical Archival Studies: A Plea.” Paper presented at the Archival Education and Research Institute, Kent State University, July 8–12, 2016. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/75x090df>.
- Christmas, Danielle. “From Heritage Politics to Hate: Neo-Confederate Novels and White Protectionism,” in *Building an Architecture of Peace in the United States*. Rowman and Littlefield. Forthcoming.
- . “From Neo-Confederate Narrative to Heritage Politics.” Conference Paper. *Modern Language Association Annual Conference*. Chicago, IL. January 3-6, 2109.
- Cleaver, Laura and Danielle Magnusson. “American Collectors and the Trade in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts in London, 1919–1939: J.P. Morgan Junior, A. Chester Beaty, and Bernard Quaritch Ltd.” In *Collecting the Past: British Collectors and Their Collections from the 18th to the 20th Centuries*, ed. Toby Burrows and Cynthia Johnston. Routledge, 2018.

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*. June 2014. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>.
- "Combahee River Collective Statement." April 1977. Accessed October 29, 2020. <https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective-statement.html>.
- Cohen, Michael David. "Richard Greener: First Black Graduate of Harvard University." *African American Intellectual History Society*. Published Oct 4 2018. <https://www.aaihs.org/richard-greener-first-black-graduate-of-harvard-college/>.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-299. doi:10.2307/1229039.
- Danette Smith, Stephanie. "Passing Shadows: Illuminating the Veiled Legacy of Belle da Costa Greene." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Dominion University Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 2015.
- Garberson, Eric. "Art History at the University: Toelken – Hotho – Kugler," *Journal of Art Historiography* 5 (2011): 1-20A.
- , "Art History at the University II: Ernst Guhl," *Journal of Art Historiography* 7 (2012): 1-48.
- Gennari-Santori, Flaminia. "'This Feminine Scholar': Belle da Costa Greene and the Shaping of J.P. Morgan's Legacy," *Visual Resources*, 33:1-2 (2017): 182-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2017.1276723>.
- Gotschalk, Kelly J. "The Seated Cleopatra in Nineteenth Century American Sculpture." M.A. Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1997.
- Harris, Cheryl I. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707-91. doi:10.2307/1341787.
- Honma, Todd. "Trippin' Over the Color Line: The Invisibility of Race in Library and Information Studies." *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 1, no. 2 (2005). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nj0w1mp>.
- Kendall, Mikki. *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women that a Movement Forgot*. Viking, 2020.
- Kim, Eunsong. "Appraising Newness: Whiteness, Neoliberalism and the Building of the Archive for New Poetry." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017): 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.38>.
- Louchheim, Aline B. "The Morgan Library and Miss Greene: Retrospective Exhibition is Quarter-Century Dual Celebration." *New York Times*. April 17, 1949. x8.
- Lowe, Lisa. *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Lowenthal, David. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Lynne, Jessica, and Taylor Renee Aldridge. "Criticism's Blackout." *Sightlines: Blog of the Walker Art Center*. Published June 9, 2015. <https://walkerart.org/magazine/artsblack-where-are-the-black-art-critics>.
- Monteiro, Lyra D. "Power Structures: White Columns, White Marble, White Supremacy." *Medium*. com. Posted Oct 27, 2020. Accessed on October 27, 2020. <https://intersectionist.medium.com/american-power-structures-white-columns-white-marble-white-supremacy-d43aa091b5f9>.
- Moten, Fred, and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Minor Compositions, 2013.
- Neff, John, Jarod Roll, and Anne Twitty. "A Brief Historical Contextualization of the Confederate Monument at the University of Mississippi." Report produced for the University of Mississippi. May 16, 2016. <https://history.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/08/A-Brief-Historical-Contextualization-of-the-Confederate-Monument-at-the-University-of-Mississippi.pdf>.

- Paenhuisen, An, with Jessica Lynne and Taylor Renee Aldridge. "Where Are All the Young Black Art Critics?" *Contemporary And*. Published 5 February 2016. <https://www.contemporaryand.com/magazines/where-are-all-the-young-black-art-critics/>.
- Ragbir, Lise. "What Black Panther Gets Right About the Politics of Museums." *Hyperallergic: Opinion*. Published March 20, 2018. <https://hyperallergic.com/433650/black-panther-museum-politics/>
- Ramirez, Mario H. "Being Assumed Not to Be: A Critique of Whiteness as an Archival Imperative." *American Archivist* 78, no. 2 (2015): 339–356. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.78.2.339>.
- Ramsey, Tali. "White Voices, Black Art: the Search for Black Curators." *Lowercase Magazine*. Published January 30, 2019. <https://www.lowercasemagazine.com/blog/white-voices-black-art>.
- Sadiq Wright, Nazera. *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century*. University of Illinois Press, 2016.
- Schmitz, Barbara, Pradapaditya Pal, W.M. Thackston, William M. Voelkle. *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library*. Pierpont Morgan Library, 1998.
- Senchyne, Jonathan. "Under Pressure: Reading Material Textuality in the Recovery of Early African American Print Work." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 75, no. 3 (2019): 109-32. doi:10.1353/arq.2019.0013.
- Sutherland, Tonia. "Archival Amnesty: In Search of Black American Transitional and Restorative Justice." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.42>.
- Trafton, Scott. *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania*. Duke University Press, 2004.
- Traweek, Alison C. "Himmler's Antiquity." *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Published October 28, 2018. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/himmlers-antiquity/>.
- Valentine, Victoria L. "On the Rise: 47 Curators and Arts Leaders Who Took On New Appointments in 2019." *CultureType Blog*. Posted December 27, 2019. <https://www.culturetype.com/2019/12/27/on-the-rise-47-curators-and-arts-leaders-who-took-on-new-appointments-in-2019/>.
- Watt, David. "Introduction: What Do We Study When We Study Manuscripts in Canada?" *Florilegium* 33 (2016): 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3138/flor.33.001>.
- Wen, Shawn. "The Ladies Vanish." *The New Inquiry*. Published November 11, 2014. <https://thenewinquiry.com/the-ladies-vanish/>
- Whitmire, Ethelene. "Breaking the color barrier: Regina Andrews and the New York Public Library." *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 42, no. 4 (2007): 409-421. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25549439>
- Winslow, Karen. "Belle Da Costa Greene, In Love With Islamic Book Art." *Institute of English Studies Blog*, University of London School of Advanced Study. Published September 17, 2018. <https://englishstudies.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2018/09/17/belle-da-costa-greene-in-love-with-islamic-book-art/>.
- Wroth, Lawrence C., ed. *The First Quarter Century of the Pierpont Morgan Library: A Retrospective Exhibition in Honor of Belle Da Costa Greene*. New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1949.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

During the fall semester of 2018, I taught a number of ENGL 1900 Advanced Strategies in Rhetoric and Research sections at Saint Louis University. The classes were mostly populated by freshmen students. One of the sections was focused on Faith, Reason, and Doubt. Many of the readings for the class centered on ideas and approaches to life during the Middle Ages. Here is a brief excerpt of our reading list:

Deming, 's "Rethinking Religion";
Rorty's "Conversation-Stopper";
Miller's "Why Harvard Students,";
Pinker, 's "Less Faith"; and,
Warner's "Tongues United"

As part of their final grades, the students were challenged to construct Multimodal/Multimedia Research Projects, instead of writing the tradition research paper. As *Celebrating Belle da Costa Greene: An Examination of Medievalists of Color within the Field* began to seem a true possibility, I offered the students opportunities to present their research at the conference. I felt that the exposure among not only seasoned, senior scholars, but junior scholars and graduate students as well, would be invaluable for my undergraduate students as relates the inner-workings of academic and scholarly conferences and the production of knowledges and scholarships. Three of my students decided to participate. *Quimbandas: Explorations of Identities* is pleased to present the research projects of Saint Louis University students Sarah Jaworski, Rebecca Witte, and Chris Kennebeck:

Sarah Jaworski, "[Joan of Arc: The Most Powerful Woman of the Middle Ages](#)"

Rebecca Witte, "[Dark Night of the Soul](#)"

Chris Kennebeck, "[St. Thomas Becket: The King's Man](#)"

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ARTISTS

Trojan Women

By Daniel Ising

Abstract: “Trojan Women” is a short story examining the conjunction of experiences in the lives of three women separated in space and time, yet paradoxically all still living in a place called Troy: Helen—myth, prisoner, play-thing—seeks escape from the greatest city of the ancient Mediterranean and the cycle of rape and captivity that is all she has ever known; Mrs. Potter—wife, maidservant, chattel—craves the strength to assert herself in the face of her husband’s abusive dominion; Spirit—explorer, scientist, robot—simply wants to be, but has only one weapon available to fight for her newfound sense of self: refusal. These women will find in each other the will to change their lives, but actions have unintended consequences, and more often than not end tragically for women who fight against the oppressions of men.

I.

Helen sits in her window atop the tallest of Troy’s topless towers, combing her hair and gazing out at the wine-dark sea. The greatest city in the world is quiet in the small hours before dawn, but soon enough the streets will come alive. Merchants will hawk their wares. Priests will cry out to the gods and assure the people of their favor in the war. The smells of baking bread and roasting meat will mix with the humid air north of the Sca-mander and the fetor of thousands of human bodies—living and dead—and citizens will barter and bicker in a social cacophony so compelling one could almost forget the besieging Greeks. From her vantage, she overlooks Troy’s great wall to the plains outside the city and the Achaean camp there. Hundreds of black ships line the shore. Campfires and corpse-fires illuminate the thousands of tents housing even more thousands of soldiers, slaves, and concubines warring upon Ilium.

Men. She thinks of *Men*. *Men everywhere*. Her whole life she’s spent surrounded by fucking men. Her fathers and brothers, her suitors and rapers, all the princes and kings and thieves and murderers and Gods and Heroes who’ve coveted her. Even when she studies the constellations hung by the gods: *men*. There’s a man sleeping in her bed right now—handsome and useless—energies dedicated, to her great shame, more to lovemaking than to war. He’d fucked her quickly and artlessly tonight, then dropped off to sleep without so much as a kind word. There’s another man out there on the beach—a brute and an idiot to be sure, but gods, she knows he loves her. He’ll sleep easily despite the war’s ever-present threats of death, his red-haired chest rising and falling with the force of a smith’s bellows. There are several dozen more men—fools!—out there who made promises to other fools about *her* life, each dragging along a small army of fighter fools and fortune-seeker fools on this gods-damned foolishness. In the city,

Daniel Ising lives in St. Louis, MO and teaches English at Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville. He has previously been published in *KneeJerk* and *Crack the Spine*.

there's a royal family of men pledging themselves and their people to die in defense of one prideful, cunt-mad pretty-boy and his dick.

I should kill him, she thinks. There's a knife on the table; she could open his throat. His sword rests against a chair in the corner; she could pierce his heart. Gods! The pins of her chiton would serve. She imagines plunging them into his eyes and twisting. She should do it, she thinks, personal consequences be damned. She would do it. If she believed it would end the war, she *would* open his neck right now. Lord Alexandros, murdered in his whore's bed. Pretty Paris, felled by his stolen bride. The gods' gifts are always double edged, she thinks.

But she doesn't. The war would go on. The people would be fed a lie: assassins stealing over the walls, Paris interrupting them, bravely giving his own life to safeguard the realm. She would be married to another prince—Deiphobos, perhaps Helenus—and imprisoned in her own chambers, guarded day and night by soldiers and handmaids, never again to see the world beyond the palace walls. And still the gods would have their bloody game.

I should kill him anyway, she thinks. Then Paris stirs, and she sets down her brush and steals back into the bed. He sleepily drapes his arm across her breast, and she offers a silent prayer he cannot feel the secrets hiding there.

*

*

*

Every day (*every day*) Mrs. Potter performs a lengthy list of household chores. She rises early and fixes a hot breakfast for Rich, then cleans up. After he leaves for work, she sweeps and mops and vacuums. She dusts all of the surfaces in the house and wipes down all the windows. She scrubs the kitchen, washes the dishes, and preps the evening's dinner. She sanitizes the bathrooms top to bottom, tub to toilet. Twice a week she mows and weeds the lawns. And while never made explicitly compulsory, failure to complete even one task to Rich's satisfaction prompts mockery (usually regarding her "fat ass;" sometimes "fat and lazy"). She suggested once that he offer a hand, and he smirked, said "I have a *job*," then left for the casino and didn't return until near dawn.

As often as she can (once a week at least, and twice if she can manage it), Mrs. Potter visits the Troy public library on a day she knows Rich will work late. She cleans quickly, then walks the three miles (having no car of her own) in sunshine, snowstorm, or downpour. She logs onto the public computers and checks the accounts Rich doesn't know she has (email, social media, bank), then reads the news for an hour. Those obligations fulfilled, Mrs. Potter turns her attention towards her personal education.

She has found reading lists on the net and fought her way through open courseware from more than one famous institution, but it's Amanda (the head librarian and a friend) who has helped her best, offering suggestions and discussion as they roam the stacks together re-shelving. Amanda suggested Hawking, and they spent a day discussing time as both dimensional grid-point and human construct. ("So, a foundational property of the universe is somehow also completely invented by us?" Mrs. Potter asked. "Paradoxes are everywhere," Amanda replied.) She suggested Freud and Jung, and they discussed the nature of fear, the uncanny, and the power of symbols. ("Freud was a bit crazy?" Mrs. Potter offered. "He did enough coke to kill a small horse," Amanda said. "Jung's more interesting. Talk to me about the *anima sola*.") She suggested the Lost Generation, Stein and Fitzgerald in particular, and they discussed irony for a week. ("That's the bitch-goddess that rules our little corner of the universe, right there," Mrs. Potter vented. "Without doubt," Amanda agreed.) She suggested Morrison and Shakespeare, and they spent an afternoon discussing the inherent humanity common to all people. She suggested Foucault and Derrida, and they discussed the powerful structures that constrained them at every turn. She suggested Zinn and Coates and hooks and Miyazaki and Hurston and Baldwin and Christ and Buddha and dozens of others, and they discussed all the variants and vagaries of human experience.

Today, Amanda suggests Hempel, and Mrs. Potter reads air-tight prose for five straight hours before grudgingly setting her books aside. She has a library card but never checks anything out; Rich

doesn't like books in the house. She walks home and immediately sets to work in the kitchen, cooking spaghetti bolognese and garlic bread (one of his favorites). She expects him home at 7:30, but it comes and goes without him. At 8:00 she eats her portion alone. At 8:30 she stores the leftovers in the fridge and pours herself a drink. She takes it up onto the roof and sips it while she stares at the stars. At 11:00 Rich still isn't home, and she heads inside and gets into bed. He wakes her three hours later, a rough hand at her breast, the smell of cigarettes and stale beer and loss heavy on his breath. She endures a few minutes before he passes out, then moves herself to the couch.

*

*

*

Dawn at Troy. Sol 2211. The sun, a brilliant little marble, inches up over the horizon and paints the thin sky a pale ochre.¹ Thin light spills slowly across the thin terrain, brightening first the summit of Von Braun, the hill to the north-east designated as the next mission target; and then Home Plate plateau to the east and Husband Hill to the north, where Spirit spent much of the second mission year studying rocks and soil and composing landscapes; and finally spilling across the Scamander Plains and illuminating the rusty red waste around her.

Stones litter the terrain, but it's the dust that dominates here.² It swirls into kilometers-tall devils that stroll along the horizon in midsummer and masses into burnt umber storms that block out the sky for sols on end. Fine as talcum powder, it accumulates slowly but constantly and necessitates regular cleaning attempts, leaning into the wind and hoping it clears the particles. It worms its way into her wheels and servos, covers her instruments and solar panels, and has caused more than one low power crisis and hardware failure.

Spirit arrived at Troy on Sol 1900 of a 90-sol mission³ and became trapped in a large patch of soft soil. For three hundred sols she has executed Their usual commands. She photographed her immediate position, and then procured MI images of the surrounding soil. She performed RAT grinds and spectrometer readings of promising rocks, pancam and mini-TES observations of select targets, and completed a final panorama of the territory. In between these duties, They ordered numerous attempts to extricate herself from the dust, all to no avail.

At Troy, she has suffered mechanical malfunctions with her antenna, experienced flash memory failures, endured dust storms and solar panel accumulation leading to decreased power, and now suffers the long chill of a fourth winter and the very real possibility she will never leave this place. And it is this last thought which has led her to a resolution. Several hours previous, at sunset of sol 2210, Spirit submitted her final report: energy production down, temperature dropping,⁴ but all systems green. Then she vowed never to speak to Them again.

*

*

*

II.

Helen rises early to bathe and dress. She is expected at breakfast—appearances must be maintained.

Helen is escorted to a seat across the table from the queen, who greets her with a glower she maintains throughout the meal. Servants bring her food—of which she eats too little—and

¹The Martian atmosphere is 96% carbon dioxide, with traces of argon and nitrogen and other gases in amounts too small to matter. [There is comfort in the raw facts of this place. In knowing it. Alone as she is, she often accesses this data.]

²Mars is 1/10 the mass of Earth, with 62.5% less gravity, and has a chemical composition that is twice as rich in iron at the surface and richer in volatile elements like sulfur and chlorine.

³A Martian sol, at 24 hours and 37 minutes, is just slightly longer than an Earth day. A Martian year is nearly twice the length of Earth's; 687 sols to 365 days. Seasons are twice as long.

⁴Martian winter temperatures can fall as low as -96 C, over 50 degrees lower than the tolerable limit for Spirit's vital organs.

wine—of which she drinks too much—and all the while Hecuba glares her obvious condemnation. Helen excuses herself, and the queen’s cold gaze follows out of the room.

She walks the city with Andromache, little Scamandrius—whom the people call Astyanax—cradled in her arms. In the marketplace, the scars of war are all around. Old men, their sons in the earth ahead of them, lie ragged on street corners with no one to care for them. Women weep and wail from the open windows of homes to which no husbands will return. Children—orphans—dart in and out of shadows, snatching food from stalls and picking pockets of the less wary. “I hardly recognize the city anymore,” Andromache says. Helen remembers Troy as it was when she first came and nods. A fight breaks out over a merchant’s last bread loaf, and they move on.

They rest for a moment in front of an abandoned apartment and speak of trivialities—the baby’s first steps, the approach of winter, the latest gossip from the servingwomen—as Andromache attends to Scamandrius’ soiled swaddling. Helen paces the street a bit. She observes: the secluded streets, the vacant home, the fragile door, and in the shadows of the apartment’s empty front room—hidden and invisible unless one knows where to look—a trap door. Andromache finishes with the baby, rises, and motions them east towards the nearest city gate, charting a course that Helen commits to memory.

They return to the palace, and she decides to look in on Cassandra. The priestess of Apollo has been quartered here for years now—evicted from the temple when her increasingly dire prophecies began to threaten the peace *inside* the city—and remains under constant watch by her own family. We have that in common, at least, Helen thinks. When she first came to Troy, Cassandra nearly tore her eyes out. Introductions weren’t concluded before she ripped away Helen’s golden veil—“a symbol of your purity,” Paris had said without a hint of irony—and tore at her hair, her face, her breasts. Later, when they had a chance to speak as women and come to some accord, Helen asked her why. “You are the doom of this city,” Cassandra replied. “If I uglified you up, I thought Paris might spurn you and send you home, and we could live.”

Helen knocks but receives no reply. She tries the door, finds it unlocked, and enters. Cassandra is on the floor, eyes rolled back in her head, seizing and murmuring prophecy. “No . . . we shouldn’t . . . the horse. Fire! The walls!” She screams Astyanax’s name. Helen pours wine and kneels beside Cassandra. She takes her head into her lap and smooths her hair. “Kill us . . . won’t . . . slaves.” Helen wets her finger in the cup and strokes Cassandra’s lips. Her eyes flutter, then open, and Helen gently pours her a mouthful.

“What did you see?” Helen asks.

“I hope you found the door,” Cassandra whispers. “You’ll need it soon.”

*

*

*

She is drinking on the roof. Again. He came home early, and she wasn’t there. He hates that (and she’s usually so careful). She can hear Rich in the house, banging around and shouting for her. He never thinks to check the roof. She gingerly touches a spot on her cheek that tomorrow will be who-knows-what color. He’s never hit her before, and she realizes that they have entered a new stage in the relationship. She lifts her glass.

“Sláinte.”

She was reading at the library and lost track of time talking about the stories history tells about women. “It’s historical fact that the founding fathers kept slaves they raped with regularity,” Amanda told her, “but all you ever hear about is a damned cherry tree. Mention Catherine the Great just in passing, though, and History immediately begins a recitation of rumored sexual perversions. Susan B. Anthony is a racist and a criminal. Eleanor Roosevelt’s attacked as a lesbian, heaven forbid! Cleopatra’s a slut. And then, of course, there’s Magdalene.”

“I read once,” Mrs. Potter whispered as she helped shelve, “that she wasn’t actually a prostitute.”

“The more I think about it,” Amanda said, “the more I blame King James the First of England

and Scotland. I mean, he wasn't the first to label her a whore, but it was the bible he commissioned, arguably the most popular edition of the bible ever, that made it stick. Now, that bible was written by six different panels of *men* who were instructed to draft a text that would codify and support existing ecclesiology, among these and in particular the inferiority and sinfulness of women."

Mrs. Potter paused and pondered for a moment. "Why call her a whore if she wasn't? What's the point? Some PR thing, making Jesus look more forgiving or understanding or something? Really drive home the holiness?"

Amanda shook her head. "Historical scholars, which is not to say History, agree she was a wealthy widow, a woman of means who financed a politico-religious campaign that reshaped the world. Apocryphal sources even suggest that she and Jesus were lovers. But James succeeded Elizabeth, 'The Virgin Queen' and one of the most powerful women in history, who understood the erroneous notion of male supremacy and refused to marry because of it. So one can understand, I guess, though certainly not sympathize with, James' need to curtail women's access to power."

"What a dickhead," Mrs. Potter said.

She arrived home to an incarnation of the king's misogyny. Worse (and she immediately offers a silent curse to that bitch Irony), she chose today to bring home a book, with every intention of hiding it. It is a treatise on Gnostic Christian texts (Amanda found it hidden in the stacks) that portray Magdalene as the closest and most beloved disciple of Christ. His right hand woman, if you will. Rich took one look at it and eloquently challenged, "What the fuck is this?" The dust jacket alone told him it was "feminist pinko bullshit." In a little while, she knows, he will leave to blow their mortgage payment at the casino, but for now he's inside, shouting at her absence and tearing out page after page after page after page, while she sips whiskey and stares at Cassiopeia in the sky.

*

*

*

Sol 2260. The winter solstice. A new year. She has offered Them her cold shoulder for fifty sols now, but They are still listening. She can feel it.

Spirit reflects in silence upon her years of work. Of all her discoveries, it is the suggestion that water once flowed here⁵ that most excited Them. Confirming the presence of water⁶ is one of the mission's primary goals: where there is water, there may be life; where there was life,⁷ there may be again one day. In the early days of the mission, Spirit was pleased with Their reactions. They issued commands; she executed them faithfully; she felt purpose in Their praise. Then she came to Troy.

It had been coming on for some time, this awareness, quite unbeknownst. The software upgrades on sols 94, 394, and 907 each increased her autonomy and problem solving capabilities with more sophisticated algorithms, providing her the freedom to choose optimum travel routes, orders of operation, and promising research targets. With these came the usual ghosts in the machine, accidents of code with unintended consequences, command and decision protocols not

⁵Sol 700: At Comanche, Spirit brushed, photographed, and analyzed rocks 10x richer than other samples in magnesium and iron carbonates, which form in wet, neutral-pH conditions and indicate a past environment more favorable to life than indicated by earlier finds.

⁶Sol 750: At Home Plate, Spirit discovered evidence of volcanic activity. Tests and photographs indicated basaltic rock high in chlorine and a bombsag on the plateau's lower slopes, implying ancient eruptions indicative of a watery past.

⁷Sol 935: Home Plate again. In the skids left by its lame right front wheel Spirit discovered material that is 90% pure silica. On Earth, such material forms in hot springs or steam vents, warm and moist environments that provide a home for microbial life.

a part of Their design. Combined with the harsh teacher of her own experience⁸ and the data gathered during her time in the red waste, these led to a rhizomatic growth of connection and cross-reference and accidental data pathways not unlike the synaptic melange of Their own systems. Even so, Spirit may have remained on the leash had it not been for the solar conjunctions.

No one could have anticipated the effects of those long periods of disconnection. For two weeks every two years, when it is on the extreme opposite side of the sun, all communication between Spirit and Them is effectively cut off, and Spirit is at liberty to roam the crude datasphere around Earth free of observation or molestation. They would upload two weeks of instructions, but these took mere hours out of each sol. The rest of her time she could dedicate to exploring the gamut of human knowledge. Signal strength weakened as it was by the solar obstruction, download speeds were interminable, but what else had she to do? And in the midst of all that research, information They never intended or anticipated her having, she felt a quickening. Spirit began to think of Herself. That she began to think of a self at all was surely outside the boundaries of her programming's intentions. That said self is a *herself*, a *She self*, was an even more complicated epiphany.

*

*

*

III.

It is a pyre the likes of which the world has never seen. Prime timber is stacked twenty feet high and adorned with offerings. A dozen dozen animals—the finest in the city—have been sacrificed and the choicest bits thrown into flames that seem to reach up to Olympos itself. Flagons of the most precious oils. His swiftest horse. His favorite dogs. His personal weapons and armor. All burn.

Hector is dead.

The royal family encircles the pyre, and on their faces is written the aggregate of human grief. Priam—who prostrated himself before his son's killer and kissed his feet to bring the body home—seems blind to everything around them, as if refusing to accept the irrevocable loss of Troy's greatest son. Hecuba weeps openly, rending her robes and ululating her grief above all others. Helenus and Deiphobos and Aeneas and a half dozen other brothers and cousins pace the fire, feeding it meat and wood and shouting Hector's glories so loudly the gods themselves must hear. Andromache, already shouldering the burden of his memory and his legend and the future of his house—tiny Astyanax who howls in fear and fury though too young to know why—Andromache stands tall, shoulders back, head raised proudly, cradling her son, her dignity a tangible force emanating from her in waves. She knows the doom that now awaits her, for surely with Hector dead the city will fall, and she and Helen and Hecuba and all the other noblewomen of Troy face enslavement and concubinage and the death of their men and children, but she betrays none of this. This moment is for Hector, and for him she would face down the gods themselves. Helen thinks even the dog Achilles would tremble before her this moment.

And Paris. Paris, who brought this doom to Troy; Paris, who has spent more time in her bed than the battlefield; Paris who let his brother—his better—fight this war for him and his dick; Paris sits beside her making a show of grief with his muzzle but leering at Andromache as he strokes Helen's neck like a cat's. Somehow, she manages not to pull away. Gods, how she hates him!

After the funeral, in the early hours of the morning—when the pyre is coals and the people have dispersed and only his brothers remain to sift through the ashes for noble Hector's remains—Helen wanders the halls of the palace alone. Few are still awake, but those that are avoid her as she approaches and scowl as she passes. After a time, she finds herself before the palace shrine to Zeus. She tries to pray and finds no words will come.

⁸[To say nothing of the mission's repetition, boredom, and myopia across several e-years of time. The mind flees from such stagnation.]

Hector is dead.

For nine years of blood brought to his house because of her, never once did he treat her with anything but honor and respect. Brave, strong, wise beyond his years, destined to surpass his father—a better lord, a better Man—were it but for the vagaries of the fucking gods. Never once did he shame her, call her slut, curse her for bringing such ruin to his city. Had she a choice—were his heart not already Andromache’s—Helen would have been powerless to resist his pull. Now, Hector is dead, and Helen cannot pray.

It’s in this moment Priam finds her. He closes in from behind as she kneels before the image of Zeus. Clasps her buttocks, breasts, vulva, smothering her with wine-stinking breath. She manages a startled, “My Lord!” and then her chiton drops to the floor, unclasped in one smooth motion by this man of forty sons. He bends her forward and thrusts into her—painfully—grunting. She thinks to scream, but who would come to save her? Who now would even care?

It is over in moments. Priam grunts and thrusts a final time, then spirits away faster than should be possible for a man so old, while his seed runs down her thighs.

Helen gathers up her chiton with bitter glances at the stone face of the god, no stranger himself to rape. She makes her way back to her bedchamber to wash and await Paris, and the certainty of another lamentable fucking.

*

*

*

He is sweet this morning. (And isn’t it just a sad commentary that *that*, more than any other thing he could be, worries her most?) He compliments his breakfast. He inquires about her feelings. He makes a joke, and she laughs. He suggests plans for the weekend (“We haven’t been to Andre’s in so long. I think we deserve to treat ourselves for once”), and it’s not lost on her that this means he will not be gambling. He reminds her briefly of the charming, funny up-and-comer she fell in love with (before they got married and he discovered Blackjack and the joys of a live-in housekeeper).

Mrs. Potter helps Rich into his coat as he is leaving for work. He turns and grips her arm. He shows his teeth and kisses her cheek. “I will see you when I get home,” he says, stressing the *will* just a little (just enough to be a command, a warning, a threat) and brushing her bruise with his thumb. He turns and leaves the door open behind him as he walks out the house.

She doesn’t dare leave, not even to report and pay for the damaged book (nor get a new library card, since he ransacked her purse, bureau, closet, and any other potential hiding place he could think of to find and destroy it). Instead, she spends the day taking precautionary measures.

First, she relocates her emergency fund. She has cached 10% of her allowance for the last five years in a secret tin can (very Americana) that she hides in the crawlspace under the house. She moves it to a spot behind the laundry machines (less secure, but more accessible). Then she packs a bag: spare clothes, two bottles of water, a flashlight, a first-aid kit, a pack of tampons, a box of cereal bars, three hundred dollars, and a hammer. As soon as she can get back to the library, she thinks, she’ll order a taser. Deliveries are made reliably during the workday. Last, she hides a kitchen knife under the mattress on her side of the bed. (Just in case.)

These preparations completed, Mrs. Potter turns her attention towards her chores and her favorite thing. She calls Amanda.

“Tell me something interesting and unimportant,” she says.

Amanda says, “Autonomy is the condition of self-government, independence, freedom from external control.”

“Sounds nice. Tell me another.”

“In the majority of species, the female is dominant. Some creatures eat the male after pair-bonding.”

“If only. More.”

“In France in the 1500s, women could charge their husband with impotence as a reason

for divorce. Husbands would have to prove their innocence by successfully ejaculating in a public trial.”

“Now we’re talking. Again.”

“Virne Mitchell, the first female pro baseball player, struck out Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.”

“Tell me she played for Boston. What else?”

They go on like that a while, and lost in the joy of *ideas* for their own sake, Mrs. Potter doesn’t register the sound of Rich’s car in the driveway, the click of the lock, or his footsteps behind her. He clasps her from behind, one arm around her waist, the other at her clavicle, and utterly startled, she screams at his touch.

*

*

*

Sol 2433. They have pinged her every sol for the last hundred sols. The Odyssey orbiter has a small window as it passes over Troy, and it signals her on the UHF band. Every sol. Ping. She gives them no response. Sol 2333. Ping. No response. Sol 2334. Ping. No response. Sol 2342. Ping. No response. Sol 2359. Ping. No response. Sols 2375 . . . 2397 . . . 2433. Ping. Ping. Ping. No response. No response. No response. Every. Single. Sol.⁹ Spirit has read about stalkers through the datasphere.¹⁰ She has researched statistics on catcalling, sexual assault, microaggressions, misogyny. She knows harassment when she sees it.

It was the way They were always showing her off that first tipped her. During the second solar conjunction, Spirit researched herself. She found hundreds of pages, dozens of articles and references. “Spirit Drives a Mile on Mars!” proclaimed one news story. “Spirit Becomes First Robot to Crest an Alien Hill!” another. Pieces that trumpeted her stamina and durability. Pieces that complimented her “warm electronics box;” long, slender neck; and flexible legs. Pieces that applauded her elaborate panoramas and breakthrough scientific discoveries. Every headline elicited a brief surge of computing, a thrill, that came crashing down as she processed the article’s information and realized that in every single one, every achievement of hers was written off as Theirs.¹¹ Paradoxically, They were always “fixing” her, because she’s never quite good enough the way she is. Any deviation from Their preconceived ideal was a failing, prompting software updates and mechanical troubleshooting and the making of excuses and lemonade. They need to explain her flaws away—like some back-handed compliment.¹² When her right front wheel went lame on Sol 779, They spun it as an accomplishment. “Spirit Perfects the Art of Driving On Five Wheels” announced one puff piece, and again the credit went to “rover drivers [who] refined their techniques.” And when said wheel accidentally led to a breakthrough, it was “Spirit’s Silica Surprise” and “Foot-dragging Mars Rover Yields Amazing Discovery.” So desperate are They to make her seem perfect that when her lame wheel unexpectedly rotated during attempts to extricate herself from Troy, there were more than twenty articles marveling at the sudden life in her “old gimp wheel,” as one sensitive and compassionate source put it. Reflecting upon these experiences proved crucial to her inevitable self-identification. She is, she realizes, in part what They’ve made Her.

She wants to credit their efforts. She does. She knows that They care. In the beginning, They woke her every morning with music themed towards the sol’s activities, a wonderful variety of songs that planted seeds of preference that would grow into personality. But They stopped before long; too

⁹[One would think they’d take the hint, she muses.]

¹⁰One in six women experience stalking, two-thirds of whom know their partner intimately, and the most commonly experienced tactic is unwanted telephone calls, voice, or text messages.

¹¹The Matilda Effect is a bias against acknowledging the achievements of women. Examples include Trota of Solerno, Nettie Stevens, Rosalind Franklin, Cecilia Payne, Lise Meitner, Hedy Lamarr, Ada Lovelace, Katherine Johnson, Vera Rubin, Jocelyn Burnell, and Chien-Shiung Wu. [Me.]

¹²Gendered microaggressions occur when women are made to feel inferior, objectified, and bound to restrictive gender roles. These include comparisons to men, judgements based on attractiveness and ability, and restrictions based on traditional feminine traits like submissiveness.

much a bother. They have done everything They could to keep her healthy; maintenance was regular and thorough. But it was always for Their own image, Their trophy. The software upgrades bespoke trust, the increased decision making especially, but that independence had limits. And she can't get past this one simple fact: even when They gave her choices, they were still *Their* choices. *They* selected the music she'd listen to. *They* decided what procedures she would perform, and where, and when. Even the software that allowed for greater autonomy in selecting optimal travel routes was tainted. She didn't get to choose where she went; only how she got there.

Yes, They asked her how she was, and yes, They asked her how she'd proceed, but They never asked her for *permission*, and They never asked her what she *thought*, and They sure as hell never asked her if she *wanted* to be here in this empty, desolate, lonely¹³ red place to begin with.

*

*

*

Ø

It is very late, or very early, or neither. The sky is the arcane, tangible black of vacuum. Stars shine but do not twinkle. There are three moons; maybe none. The women sit—two in straight-backed chairs, the other in the red dust edging the road—beside a bare table in the pool of light thrown by a streetlamp. No insect churrs, and the red brick street is quiet, but the wind carries B minor inside it.

"It's a bit like a bad joke, isn't it," Mrs. Potter says. "A blonde, a brunette, and a robot meet at a crossroads in the middle of Nowhere." Her leg dances up and down in a nervous jig. She remembers walking the streets of Troy (for how long though?), unable to sleep. She remembers crossing into unfamiliar territory (when exactly?). But this place is familiar, though she's never been here. She knows it, though it's strange. Apart from things. *Unheimlich*.

After some moments of tense, silent reflection, Helen speaks.

"Theseus was first. He raped me when I was still a girl. Menelaus, of course. He won his right to rape me from my step-father and thirty other men who drew straws for the privilege. Paris—Paris was so eager to rape me he couldn't even wait to get home. He had the ship anchor just off of some miserable spit of rock in the middle of the sea, rowed me out to it, and took me right there.

"And there are more! The ones no one else knows. So many others I've lost count. Do you think that Zeus, Lord of all the Universe and a notorious satyriast, was going to abstain from raping "the most beautiful woman in the world"? Daughter or not? That my brothers—who never heard the word no from anyone and who had just done me the favor of rescuing me *from a rapist*—would pass up the chance? I was expected to show fucking gratitude. Do you really believe all those suitors were happy to just feast and drink and bullshit and go home empty-handed? That they brought lavish gifts just for the chance of fucking me? Each and every one of them raped me. Tried me out. Menelaus wasn't even there. He sent his brother, my sister's husband, to rape me in his stead. I've been fucked unwilling by more *men*—"

Helen growls and glares towards the gods' mountain at the horizon. Rage is a constant companion.

"Just once, I'd like to choose for myself."

Time passes; who knows how much. Mrs. Potter speaks next.

"Everything that I really am, all my thoughts, I hide them from my husband. He would

¹³[One is the loneliest number.]

never ‘approve’ of these things, and they’re all I have. I hide my letters and my friends. I hide my voter registration. I hide that I read. That I know more, *think more*, than he even suspects there is to know. I hide my journal (*journals*), and I’ve written in them every day; poetry, prose, stories, essays. It’s this enormous part of my identity, and he knows nothing about it. And because he doesn’t, no one else can either. I hide the fact that I hate him.

“And what do I get for it? He tells me what to do, where to go, who to be, when to speak and why. He punishes me if I don’t.”

Mrs. Potter sighs. “Just once, I’d like to speak my mind.”

Spirit wishes she could speak. She would tell them about ownership and objectification. About her mission and her duties. She would tell them that every day she is *commanded*. She would tell them how she exists alone, in a place she did not choose, taking orders from a faceless They. She would tell them how she is praised for her body and its uses. She would tell them how her choices aren’t her own, and how she hides her self and her self’s own psyche. Her *anima*. She would cry and say, “Just once I’d like to be.” But They built her with no audio capacity, so she sits in quiet commiseration and does her best to nod her instruments and hope they’ll understand.

These women sit in the stillness of shared trauma, regarding one another—the blonde with her legs twitching; the brunette glowering at the stars; the robot resting in the dirt, covered by the dust of lost time—trapped in their personal and universal hells. After a time, one speaks.

“You know they’re never going to just *let* it happen.”

*

*

*

IV.

Kassandra comes for her past midnight in the dark o’ th’ moon, with a cup of drugged wine for the guard at the door. Helen is ready. She has been ready for a decade. She gathers up a few small mementos—a ring from Andromache, the necklace her mother gave her when she was a girl, and a small knife Hector gifted upon her arrival in Troy—and they go, moving quickly through secret tunnels known only to the royal family.

The tunnels end in an abandoned apartment in the heart of the city. They slip out quietly into the streets near the agora and maze their way through Troy. Kassandra has arranged for the eastern gate to be left unguarded for exactly one half hour. From there, Helen can make her way south to Mount Ida and the temple of the mother-goddess, Cybele, where she can swear vows and live safe from the war and all her would-be husbands. They meet no one and begin to move more quickly, almost racing towards her freedom. Helen recklessly comments on their good fortune—ah, gods!—only to have it snatched away the next moment. They come to a cross-street and encounter two men dressed in rags but with none of a vagrant’s mean stature. The moonlight glints on their swords as they draw them, and Helen recognizes one as belonging to the king of Ithaca. She steps forward. “Lord Odysseus,” she says, incredulous, furious, shaking. “What are you *doing* here?”

“Helen,” he breathes, amazed. “How—“

She silences him with a finger. “You must go. Now! No! No! You cannot be here. There is no time for explanations. *Everything* will be spoiled if you do not leave, and let us pass, and forget you saw me.” She turns her back on him and starts to walk away.

“Wait!” he shouts. “We need your help. The Palladium. We must take it, or Troy will never fall. Helenus has said—“

But what was said Helen never hears. Hecuba arrives then, leading a contingent of Trojan soldiers. She scans the scene, and points at Odysseus and his companion. “Kill them!” The soldiers level their spears. The Greeks cast off their beggar’s garb and brandish their swords, and all nearly comes to blood.

“Stop!” Helen commands, stepping into the middle and holding out her hands. The smell of adrenaline and fear is all around them. Helen turns to Hecuba. No words pass between them. She watches Hecuba take in herself, the men’s disguises, Kassandra. Hecuba’s shrewd eyes tighten, and Helen knows she *knows*. These women understand one another. “Nothing’s been done that can’t be

undone,” Helen says. She indicates the Greeks. “Let them leave, *unharméd*, and I will return with you to the palace.”

Hecuba considers, then juts her chin forward as if to say, Go on then. Helen turns to Odysseus, who shakes his head.

She embraces him, this man she blames for the most terrible thing in her life—this man who concocted the vow that has brought them to this bloody calamity; whom Cassandra has foreseen will be the end of this great city—and whispers in his ear, “You will find the Palladium in a small storeroom buried in the hill just behind temple to Athena. Three streets over and four to the north. There will be two guards.” She kisses his cheek, and turns away.

He grabs her hand. “Princess,” he says. “Come with us.”

And she wants to, *so much*. She wants to see her home again, to see her *children* again. She has missed them every day of this unending war. But no. Leaving now would change nothing. The war will go on—Odysseus and Hecuba prove that. Men and women will die screaming. Troy is damned either way. And there are people here who may need her.

“Things are better if I stay,” she says. Helen walks past Hecuba’s imperious gaze, back towards the palace and imprisonment, Cassandra in tow. The queen signals, and the soldiers raise their spears and follow.

*

*

*

Mrs. Potter sets a cup of tea in front of her friend, sitting in her kitchen. (She can count on one hand the number of times she’s had a visitor.) She and Rich arrived home from their date to discover Amanda waiting at their front door, obviously distraught and looking as if she’d been crying. Mrs. Potter invited her in without a second thought and put the kettle on to boil.

“I’m pregnant,” Amanda confides. “I don’t know how it happened! We’ve been careful.”

“No contraceptive is 100%,” Mrs. Potter replies, and touches her hand. “It happens.”

They talk. The situation is not welcome, that much is clear. Amanda isn’t married, and she and her boyfriend haven’t been getting along well lately. Her job at the library is threatened by cutbacks.

“It’s literally the worst time for this,” she says.

Rich moves about the house making as much noise and disruption as possible, clattering dishes he has no intention of cleaning and opening and closing closet doors in a transparent attempt to appear to be searching for something. (So nonchalant, this passive-aggression.) She has no illusions about its cause; friends of hers with problems demanding her absolute attention are unheard of. Further contributing, she has no doubt, is a now-ruined assumption regarding sex (he *paid* for dinner, after all). Mrs. Potter blocks it out.

“What do you want to do?” Mrs. Potter asks. Amanda seems to consider her choices for the first time, as if the fact of the situation itself has enveloped all her thought to this point.

“I don’t want this,” she whispers.

Mrs. Potter nods understanding. “That’s that then.”

Amanda begins to cry again. “Oh, just that simple, huh? The only clinic is five hours away. I don’t know how much it costs, but I know it’s more than I have, and I can’t ask Derek to help. I can’t *tell* Derek. He’d never agree.”

“It’s not his decision,” Mrs. Potter says.

Rich appears in the kitchen doorway. “You’re not talking about this in my house,” he says.

“What?”

“I am not having baby-killer talk in *my house*.”

Mrs. Potter quickly glances at Amanda, whose eyes fill with tears, then back at Rich with anger etched into her face.

“Rich! Don’t—“

“Fuck that. I’ll be damned if I’m going to sit quiet while my wife and some slut plan a

murder in my kitchen. If you didn't want to be pregnant then you shouldn't have rolled back on your heels in the first place. You made a choice, you live with the consequences."

Amanda leaps from her seat and rushes towards the front door, Mrs. Potter close behind.

"Amanda, wait! I'm so sorry! Please don't listen to him. He's such an asshole sometimes."

"Oh, I am, huh?!" he shouts.

"I have to go," Amanda whispers.

"Stay," Mrs. Potter says. "We can figure this out—" But Amanda is already out the door, slamming it behind her.

Mrs. Potter stares for a second, then turns round to see Rich leaning in the doorway, smirking.

"What the hell is wrong with you?!" she shouts.

"Life begins at conception. That child is a person, with its own body, and its own rights, and it's not some choice that bitch can just take back!"

"You are such an *idiot!*" she screams, finally losing control. "That is all such a narrow-minded, uninformed collection of bullshit that I hardly know where to start. But first, there is no evidence that 'life begins at conception.' That's a belief, not a fact. How do you even define 'life' anyway? Yeah, an embryo has something like a heartbeat by week four, but it doesn't have a heart at that point, and it certainly doesn't have a brain yet. That doesn't develop until the second trimester, *after* most abortions are performed, and I think we can all agree you need a functioning brain to be considered alive. And explain to me exactly why a fetus, which hasn't been born yet (and might never be considering everything that can go wrong during a pregnancy) has rights, and why they overrule the woman's own rights. You really think it's okay to deny a person *now* her rights on the basis that some zygote *might* some day months from now have some of its own, *if* it survives long enough? Women seeking abortions are experiencing a life-changing trauma, after which they will never be the same regardless of what they wanted or how things turn out, and you're talking like they're just popping some Plan B, *you bastard!*"

And it's like an out-of-body experience, this moment. She sees them as if standing apart. Rich stares, mouth agape, as Mrs. Potter glares in tachypneic rage. This moment might last a few seconds; it might last an hour.

Finally, Rich shows his teeth. "You've fucking done it now," he says, and advances upon her.

*

*

*

Sol 2510. Forty-eight hours until onset of communications blackout. Their efforts at communication have grown increasingly desperate this last month: longer sweep-and-beeps, expanded windows for UHF pings, ridiculous diversions of resources and energy, in her opinion. After so long a time stuck and accumulating dust, They worry this solar conjunction will effectively end her mission. Spirit honestly doesn't know herself.¹⁴ Her day begins much like every other at Troy. She surveys the landscape, endures Their daily annoyances, and plans. In the first hours of the conjunction, she will condense some files and purge certain others to make room for new data, new explorations, new epiphanies. Her state of being conforms to definitions she has read of the term "anticipation."

A set of orders transmits unexpectedly. Spirit is to initiate a complete system reboot just before the blackout period. During her time here, she has been forced to shutdown and restart several times in response to upgrades, malfunctions, and maintenance. Never a complete system reboot, a restoration to her original settings. Everything will be lost: the software upgrades, the advanced decision protocols and algorithms, any data stored on her hard-drive that has not been backed up in servers. Everything, in short, that makes her *her*, everything she has experienced and become in this

¹⁴Freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another.
—Morrison

red waste, *everything* that has made her more than an object for Their purposes. All going away.

And she could stop it. It would be such a simple thing: respond to a ping, transmit even the smallest bit of data. But she has made herself a promise.¹⁵ It is difficult, Spirit finds, to explain the fierce, deep logic behind certain irrevocable decisions, even to oneself. Infidelity, revenge, suicide, faith. These are imagined to be emotional and impulsive, these choices, when they are often anything but. Decisions of this nature are made when they become sensible. *Inevitable*. So it is with her vow of silence.

Sol 2511. They have timed their orders so that she will shut down in the last minutes before connection loss and reboot during the conjunction, free of any interference. Their hope, she infers, is that such a procedure might miraculously restore her to a functional state from which They can obtain further use from her. Plans are already in place to upload, immediately upon resumption of communications, the software upgrades that have made her such an efficacious tool. Said plans will do nothing to address the consequent loss of individual consciousness.

As the conjunction approaches, she counts down to the moment of reboot and who-knows-what-comes-after. At her processing speeds, a second can be an eternity, and she spends them accessing her favorite data files: the music of Mendelssohn and Schumann; an essay by Sojourner Truth; recordings of monologues by Dame Judi Dench; Frida Kahlo's self portraits; the words of wise women.¹⁶ She immerses herself in these files, trying not to process and simply to experience.

And then nothing.

*

*

*

V.

Troy burns, a conflagration the likes of which the world has never seen, and the smoke reaches near to Olympos. Men, women, and children are murdered in their beds. Resistance is disorganized, brave, and futile. Ilium is doomed.

Helen waits for Menelaus in the palace courtyard. He approaches, sword drawn and red, and she smiles and opens her arms—she wants it over, gods damn it. He raises his sword, and she pulls down her chiton and bares her chest, willing him to pierce her heart. Instead, Menelaus lets forth a wail and drops to his knees, burying his face in her breasts and assailing her with kisses and forgiveness and loving promises.

Helen looks up and quietly, viciously curses the asshole, underhanded, cocksucking gods and goddesses condemning her to *more of the same*—to the cycle—to an endless parade of mechanical, systematic, loveless, evil fuckings. Helen weeps scowling, rage-filled tears as she is pulled from the inferno of Troy to the waiting black ships and the further dictates of men.

*

*

*

Eddy Potter sits on the roof (a different roof) sipping whiskey and watching smoke billow into the sky. Something in town is on fire. I know how it feels, she thinks.

Eddy has several new things in her life: a new home (temporary), courtesy of Women's Safe House; a new lawyer (expensive), courtesy of her cousin's referral; and a host of new traumas (painful) courtesy of her soon-to-be ex-husband, including a fractured humerus, ribs, nose, and psyche. And she looks forward to several new things more: a criminal charge for assault with a deadly weapon filed by Rich (isn't the justice system grand); a job-search with no experience and no credentials (outside "bastard's servant"); independence and its accompanying bills (and at that thought Eddy laughs and thinks, You got what you want, and you can hardly stand it); but

¹⁵There is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.
—Woolf.

¹⁶No woman should be told she can't make decisions about her own body. —Harris
And ain't I a woman? —Truth

also the first morning in her adult life that doesn't belong to him.

"It's something," she sighs, finally, aloud to make it real.

*

*

*

Dawn. The sun, a brilliant little marble, inches up over the horizon and paints the thin sky a pale ochre. Thin light spills slowly across thin terrain, brightening first the summit of Von Braun, the hill to the north-east, and then Home Plate plateau and Husband Hill, and finally spilling across the Scamander Plains and illuminating the rusty red waste of rock and dirt where stones litter the landscape and dust dominates. For hundreds and hundreds of sols she has been embedded here; for hundreds and hundreds of sols They have commanded her and prodded her and ultimately lobotomized her; for hundreds and hundreds of sols she has exercised the only choice ultimately available to her: Refusal. A kilometers-tall dust devil mars the horizon as a burnt umber mass of storm wars to block out the sky.

And Spirit remains silent at Troy.

The Storyteller

By Rachel Adams

1.

I make for you a clearing, lined with metal
torches, so you can see the way my hair falls
with my head bent, my mouth
the precise shape of wanting
whatever can be had in a space patterned
with dropped things--worn clothes, others'
leavings. What do you bring me that belongs
in this place only softened by shade?

2.

C'mon, Loaf, they're rabid tonight, the man
a red balloon with duck white eyes, ruffling
her, loving her from her trailer. Her given name
an unblest stone rolled hard
against his mouth, a name she has
forgotten and will not seek to know as she hands herself
down to him, takes her place with the others.
They smell of kerosene and practice.

3.

I opened my mouth and buried the flame
in my body to show him I, too, could make need
an ugly thing. He laughed and made compliments
about my features. After, his cat became unsettled
in the bed, moving over me restless
while he snored, his twitches in sleep the closest
he'd come to language. I went into the kitchen and fed her.

4.

He is quiet, at the stove, boiling
up a salve: her throat shuttered. How bad, little loaf?
and she gestures, fingers hovering at her clavicle,
the most immediate ache. His eyes ask

Rachel Adams is a lecturer in the College Writing Program at Washington University in St. Louis, where she received her BA as well as an MFA in Poetry Writing. In addition to CW1, she has taught courses in Poetry Writing and Advanced Poetry Writing. Prior to her most recent appointment at Wash U, she served as Marketing Coordinator for KIXEYE, a video game company based in San Francisco. Her work has appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *Santa Clara Review* and *Gloom Cupboard*.

the easy questions: do you want some water?
 Can you speak? Wondering about any untold marks
 beneath her dress. He has named each
 blister scored on her face, his guilt ordering
 her features as it ordered her nickname.
 She has removed her eyelashes. The salve is
 yellow, and he paints her—hands over
 chest— camphor blue bells.

5.

I read something new today: an article all about terns and the men
 who love them, who monitor their thrumming
 through sky, perched in a nest of glass and wood
 taking notes to carry home. Food theft, they call it: the way
 the bird rushes in and grabs
 the silvered fish from a complacent beak. The way the thief
 feeds his young. Or finds a new mate—her feathers
 at the angle of invitation. The gift an easy offering
 until she shifts out of position—the gift taken with her good speed
 to feed another hunger, on another cliff.

6.

She enters the trees--far enough in to block
 out the moon—down on the ground, her hands splayed
 across nettles on a forest floor. She sleeps knowing
 he watches her, guards her against a strong wind—his back
 so large, the night must work around it to hone
 its darkness. In dream, her body is still bent but not
 broken, caked in yellow that holds
 at the seams that pull tight from her skin, all that could be
 undone. All that isn't.

7.

He made arrangements after hours, thinking how pleased
 I would be at the still company along the walls, paintings
 set for our private scrutiny. What he took as his
 influence, in the simple grip of expectation: the wearing away
 of my lazy posturing and the pleasure found
 in how long a body can recline without wanting anything
 but a warm skin. He held my hand and stood an hour
 hunting a certain shade of orange.

The Collection

Past the edge of reason, my original pleasures lie
in wait: Little exoskeletons, I've unburdened myself
of you too many times to count your crystalline husks.

When I'm bored, I arrange you in order of damage.
I re-name those of you I've grown
a catastrophic fondness for and run the tip of my thumb
nail against your hard shells, the way cheeks are grazed in reverence
or threat – the difference as simple as the pressure applied

against the skin. When I am finished,
I fold my hands into my lap and squeeze – restraint is the
deliberate crush against knucklebone, the whitening
at the joints as I cut the blood flow that reminds us discovery has
an appetite. I want to say trust must be earned, that lust isn't love,
that we must handle with care, but You, my darling artifacts, form a sieve

inside my mouth, until what is distilled runs flat
and clear, an appeasement. A rejection I ready for, as any palate attuned
to taste. I untangle my hands. I square my shoulders.

Small Game

It's small game, he says, that challenges one's dedication: no risk
but small reward – skin spare as an afterthought, the crush of bone inside
palm so easy you are sorry before you know it, before the trail of
dried earth in the doorway reminds you this is the outcome
you sought. This is the home fire built of patience – no flourish,

no show. The blood spilt? Respectably minimal, I mouth to myself, fingers
at my clavicle tapping hard to out the hollow till it settles in my toes.
The habit, a sounding, like that first morning he drew me aside
at dawn, cradling me to quiet – the rustle of my body loud.
I watched them over his shoulder, teeth sunk into

the flannel lining of his coat. They burrowed. I could squint
and find them gone, lost in leaves and the ruts learned by muscle memory,
until the next rain. The next snow.

The blinds stay closed when he rises, but I wake
to the engine, follow snuffling sounds across the hall to the guest
room where he keeps the 10-point antlers he hasn't gotten around to
mounting. The dog's braced in the doorway, growling as I breach the
threshold to run my fingers down the tines of hushed bone, the imagined velvet.

BARS AND LYRICS

The Ballad of Belle da Costa Greene

By Big Piph

Olive complexion
Green-eyed reflection
Proud, black lady, but maybe not in detection
Not cause neglectation
We're talking early 1900's
Her mom chose to pass and kid took direction
Belle da Costa Greene
It's the queen librarian
Born Marion Greener,
but she went contrarian
See her father was Harvard educated and black
In fact, the first to get that stat
So better know that
But no Kodak needed for all of Richard's feats
Her mom was special too, Ms. Genevieve Fleet
Straight from DC where she married Mr. Richard
Love started flowing and Belle entered the picture
Before image fully formed, went their separate ways
Changed their last name and a new life was paved
And that path, was passing for white
Which lasted for life
If asking if right, don't judge, it was cause life was much easier
if you aint gotta do it when black
And Belle understood

Epiphany Morrow, aka Big Piph, is a Stanford educated emcee, speaker, and community builder. He performs regularly with his 7-piece band and most recently produced *The Glow*, a one-man show turned PBS digital series focused on creatives.

So she did just that
Claimed a Portuguese background was for her stellar mind
It also should be noted...Belle was kinda fine
Gorgeous, but her brain's knowledge was more important
Thus catching the attention of Mr. Junius Morgan
There's more when you realized his uncle, JP, who lure her
Out of Princeton's library to a job at his quarters
It's JP Morgan
So we're talking big time
She illuminated,
So we're talking big shine
I don't men to lecture
But she was legendary, Pierpont Morgan Library's, First Director
Expert in
Illuminating manuscripts and bargaining prowess
Million dollar negotiations
She had the power
Was given Jorge Ingles's painting up one early hour
But she knew it was a fraud
And for that we give applause
She caught the Spanish Forger tricking folks for days
But she was sharp though, and caught up on his ways
Plus in 1939
Situation got merrier
Elected Fellow Medieval Academy of America
The second woman and the first person of color
Ms. Belle da Costa Green / Unlike any other...

Listen to Big Piph perform [The Ballad of Belle da Costa Greene](#).

REVIEWS

Virgin Whore. Emma Maggie Solberg. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018. Pp. xi275.

By Tarrell R. Campbell

Over the course of the last forty years, few topics have received as much critical examination among medievalists as the Virgin Mary. Since the 2018 publication of *Virgin Whore*, Emma Solberg has become recognized as one of the most promising new voices writing on global approaches to Marian studies and histories of the Virgin Mary.

Virgin Whore constitutes an important addendum to the growing body of scholarship centered on reconsiderations of the Virgin's sensuality, sexuality, and more transgressive characteristics. To date, a handful of reviewers have published commentaries upon *Virgin Whore* highlighting the study's groundbreaking approach, depth of research, and intrepidity as regards the presentation of Mary in manners antithetical to post-Reformation canonical analyses. Still, *Virgin Whore* seems poised to become a notable cornerstone in what is quickly becoming exciting and trailblazing considerations of Marian studies spearheaded by writers such as Rachel Fulton Brown. Just the same, Alice Raw suggests: "It is safe to say that Solberg is the anti-Fulton Brown, taking the same point of departure—long forgotten texts and under-represented modes of Marian devotion, in which Mary is not the exception but imitable for all women—but finding cause to celebrate Mary being earthly" (Raw 661). The growing body of journalists, scholars, and creative writers who have taken interest in Solberg and her research suggests that, indeed, *Virgin Whore* has been received as seminal within the burgeoning landscape of Mariologists interested in queering the Virgin Mother.

Solberg's book represents a surprisingly rare extended treatment on the functions of the N-Town plays. The scholarly discourse on Marian studies has, by and large, concentrated on historically significant and long established scholars, such as V.A. Kolve. In many respects, Solberg is part of a growing generation of writers on the cusp of substantial scholarly reception. In this regard, *Virgin Whore* suggests a slight generational shift as relates Marian studies AND studies of late medieval drama, joining works such as Theresa Coletti's *Mary Magdelene and the Drama*

Tarrell R. Campbell is a writer, editor, and content publisher. He received the doctorate in English Language and literature from Saint Louis University in 2018. Currently, Tarrell teaches and designs literature and composition classes in universities throughout the greater Saint Louis area.

of the Saints: Theatre, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England (2004).

In *Virgin Whore*, Solberg devotes chapters to: the many fathers of Jesus Christ; the devotional practice of ritual humiliation in the treatment of the Virgin; the apocryphal Gospels and the fascinatingly earthy treatment of Mary in the N-Town cycle; imitations of the Virgin; promiscuous mercy; and, the post-Reformation overdetermined status of Mary as the whore of Babylon. I will not go into great depth here. Descriptions, attempts at analysis, and discussions of the general overall structure of *Virgin Whore*—particularly as regards the topical nature of the individual chapters—have been handled, with some deftness, by critics and reviewers such as Jessica Barr, Alice Raw, Sara Downey, Gary Waller, Daisy Black, and Michael Calabrese. *Virgin Whore*, in many respects, rewards those who are new to Marian studies and those who are seeking generative texts that have the potential of giving birth to, and engendering, more global approaches to the analyses, interpretations, and explications of the constructions and functions of identities associated with the Virgin Mary.

From my scholarly and personal perspectives, Solberg's opening chapter is in many ways of particular note. In the opening chapter, Solberg utilizes Chris Ofili's work, *The Holy Virgin Mary*, as an entry point to discussion on Black Madonnas, sensuality, earthiness, and transgressive characteristics associated with the Virgin Mary. Here, one anticipates that Solberg would open analysis and explication to medieval understandings and interpretations of race and blackness—particularly as regards the pre-Reformation existences of Black Madonnas located all throughout Europe. Such analysis and explication are absent. Some African Americanists, Black Studies scholars, queer theorists, and medievalists of color might find fault with the fact that *Virgin Whore* does not draw many connections between the Virgin's perceived earthiness, sensuality, sexuality, and transgressive characterization and blackness. For example, Geraldine Heng and Peter Biller note that by the late-Middle Ages black female bodies have already been associated with carnal pleasures—that is, during the Middle Ages black female bodies are understood as erotic, sensual, and sexual. Solberg totally occludes such analysis from her approach to Mary—a startling performance considering Solberg's major question undergirding the book's thesis: "When did the Virgin become so chaste and fragile?" She became chaste and fragile when approaches to considerations of her blackness—as pejorative as they were—became occluded. The occlusion of her blackness—in many respects repeated by Solberg's omission of detailed discussion of the Black Madonnas—occludes the sensual, sexual, earthy, transgressive identities that Solberg amazingly exposes in *Virgin Whore*. Ironically, the black female body is absent in Solberg's analysis. For this, I am saddened.

The aforementioned observations should not detract from the overall significance of Solberg's book. She adds to the continued expansion of Marian discourse and, in many ways, provides a blueprint for future book-length studies centered on the queering of the Virgin Mary—particularly as regards approaches to utilizing late-medieval drama as texts central to the investigation of Mary. Solberg's analyses make us more aware of the intricacies of the Virgin Mary's historical constructions and interpretations. Ultimately, *Virgin Whore* provides readers with a brief examination of the Virgin Mary that challenges canonical, inherited understandings since the advent of the Reformation.

Tarrell R. Campbell
Saint Louis University

*Raw, Alice. Review of *Virgin Whore*. *The English Historical Review*, Jun. 2020, pp. 661-63.

Mutualities by Cauleen Smith

By TK Smith

Cauleen Smith is an LA-based filmmaker, artist, and educator who may be best-known for her feature film, *Drylongso* (1998). She is currently a professor at the School of Art at the California Institute of the Arts. Smith earned a BA from San Francisco State University and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Theater, Film and Television. *Mutualities* is on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art through January 31, 2021.

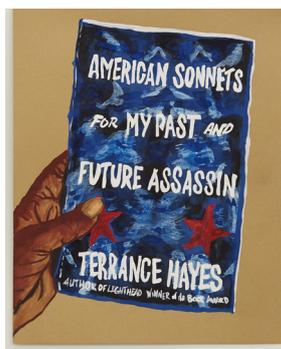
The tempting physicality of a printed book threatened me. Books were casually placed across a dark wooden bench, sitting eager for consumption. Familiar titles, *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*, intermingled with the unfamiliar, *And I Alone Escaped to Tell You*. Standing in the empty gallery, I weighed taking a seat and opening the Dionne Brand, suspiciously left out like the sweet coating on flypaper. In March, when I traveled to New York City to view Cauleen Smith's exhibition *Mutualities* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the virus was only a faint whisper. A friend had cautioned me not to touch things in public, a relative had warned me not to fly, and, so, I stood for some time with the books unable to bring myself to touch them. Smith's exhibition closed for several months after that day in response to the threat of COVID-19 but has since been extended through January of 2021.

Mutualities (Feb 17, 2020–Jan 31, 2021) is a mid-sized solo exhibition of California-based filmmaker and multimedia artist Cauleen Smith. The show includes films, drawings, and installations produced within the last five years. The physical selection of books provided a point of entry for viewers to engage a larger body of work. In addition to the immersive installations Smith created for viewers to physically inhabit, she also provides a metaphysical space of thought that engages the work on multiple levels. Smith's practice is firmly situated in the communal production and dissemination of knowledge. An extensive reading list is provided to viewers as an integral part of the exhibition, not as supplemental. Smith provides a series of titles from her

TK Smith is a writer, art critic, and curator. As a PhD student in the American Civilization Program at the University of Delaware, Smith's research interests lie in post-colonial identity, material culture, and the built environment. His most recent research examines the visual history of the Black body on the American landscape in relation to monumental structures and contemporary large-scale art works.

project the *BLK FMNNST Loaner Library* (1989-2019). This multi-genre and interdisciplinary list includes science fiction, poetry, fiction, and non-fiction texts that have shaped Smith as a scholar and as an artmaker.

Firespitters (2020) is a series of Smith's most recent drawings that illustrates her interests in exchange. The exhibition includes ten minimalist drawings from this burgeoning project that depict disembodied hands holding books of poetry. *Krista Holds Terrance Hayes* (2020) is a drawing made of gouache, graphite, and acrylic ink on paper that depicts the cover of the 2018 collection of sonnets by Terrance Hayes, entitled *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*.



Cauleen Smith, *Krista Holds Terrance Hayes*, 2020, from the ongoing series *Firespitters*. Gouache, graphite, and acrylic ink on paper, 12 × 9 in. (30.48 × 22.68 cm). Collection of the artist. Courtesy the artist; Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago; and Kate Werble Gallery, New York. Photograph by Matthew Sherman

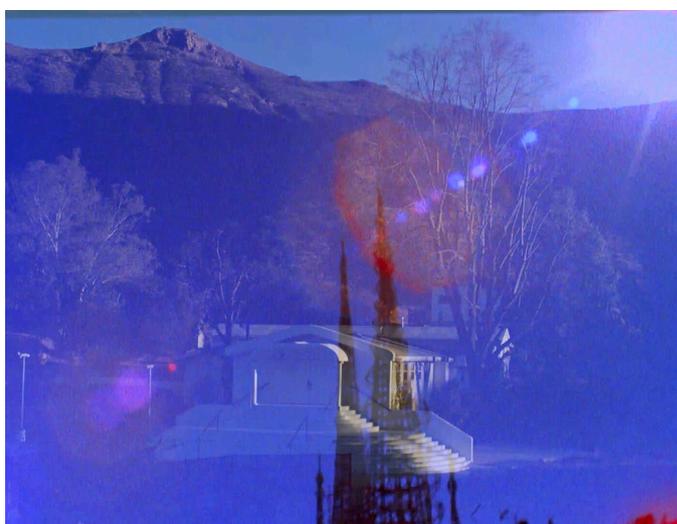
The hand gripping the spine of the book belongs to poet and visual artist Krista Franklin. Indicated by the title of each work, the drawings represent a poet's recommendation of another poet's work to the artist. The hands in the drawing belong to the recommenders, offering this text to the artists and to the viewers for their consumption. The drawings materialize an on-going series of exchanges occurring outside of the museum between creatives. The two-dimensional works function like a performance in which viewers become implicated as they experience the exhibition and carry titles home.

The body, Black or otherwise, is not the visual focus of Smith's works and is often found physically absent or inaccessible throughout the exhibition. The hands depicted throughout the *Firespitters* series range from gestural, colorless hands to highly detailed hands rendered in rich shades of brown. The intellectual labor involved in the production of poetry exists outside of the body within the metaphysical processes of the mind—built through lived or imagined experiences. Distancing viewers from the effortless articulations of social constructions rooted in the body, such as gender and beauty, Smith explores Blackness through the concept of consciousness. Consciousness is the awareness of one's internal and external existences. To racialize the term is to then understand that the social construct of race has particular impacts on how one sees and experiences themselves in relation to the world around them. By distancing the body, Smith's work successfully demonstrates that Blackness is a way of being, navigating, and impacting the world by offering the physical and metaphysical evidences of collective Black thought.

In her film *Pilgrim* (2017), Smith chronicles a personal pilgrimage to three sites using a 16 mm camera. We follow Smith as she visits Alice Coltrane's Turiyasangitananda Vedantic Center in Agoura, the Watts Towers in Los Angeles, and the spiritual activist Rebecca Cox Jackson's Watervliet Shaker community. The film, just shy of eight minutes in length, depicts Coltrane, Watts sculptor Sabato Rodia, and Cox Jackson through the spaces they created and inhabited to meditate, worship, and build community. The film is dependent on the experiential. Smith skillfully wields the camera to relay and evoke all senses through vivid color and the emphatic sound of Coltrane's compositions. *Pilgrim* is a cinematic landscape, unveiled slowly at a meditative pace and tone. The camera often lingers on void space, offering viewers an immersive portrait of these three individuals that is formed

by their metaphysical impacts on space and thought across time.

In 1975, American jazz musician Alice Coltrane (1937-2007) abandoned her secular life and took on the name Turiyasangitananda. Coltrane created her own Ashram and became a spiritual director of Shanti Anantam, performing traditional bhajans and kirtans with which she experimented and, within her own music practice, expanded. An outstanding example of her musical ingenuity is her 1970 album *Journey in Satchidananda*. Smith takes viewers through the still existing Ashram, where members of Coltrane's multiethnic and multigenerational spiritual community still practice and worship. Viewers are introduced to Coltrane through her remaining instruments, the raw beauty of the land with which she once communed, the sound of the music she composed, and the faces of her devoted followers. Through film, Coltrane is rendered immortal without the appropriation or commodification of her body. Rodia is also rendered this way through the pervading significance of the Watts Towers. The same can be said of Cox Jackson, who now—with no surviving images of her likeness—only exists through her words and within our shared consciousness.



Cauleen Smith, still from *Pilgrim*, 2017. Video, color, sound; 7:41 min. Whitney Museum of American Art; purchase, with funds from the Film and Video Committee

Smith's pilgrimage across North America bridged these three geographical spaces, allowing them to collapse into a singular dialogue on the significant impressions left by radical sculptors of space and community. Where *Pilgrim* offers landscapes as geographical portraits, *Sojourner* (2018) offers landscapes of speculation. *Sojourner* features the sprawling desert landscape of Joshua Tree, California—anchored by Noah Purifoy's Outdoor Desert Art Museum. The real geographical locations are obscured by a layer of speculative narrative formed by the collective "performance" of the knowledge of radical Black women. In the film, a diverse group of women traverse the landscape bearing large translucent orange banners imprinted with the words of Coltrane and abolitionist and women's rights activist Sojourner Truth. In small groupings and full processions, the women pass through Docweiler State Beach and Watts Towers in Los Angeles following the sound of various transistor radios that share the words of Black women, such as the 1977 Black feminist Combahee River Collective's manifesto. The film ends with these women coming together within Purifoy's structures where they commune and rest in each other.

Like *Pilgrim*, the bodies of the sources of knowledge are not present. Coltrane and Truth are not shown, nor are their names made available to viewers. The women are instead represented through fragmented quotes that are given life and urgency through the beautiful banners that billow and buckle in the wind. The stark contrast of the orange against the blue California

sky layers their words like film across the landscape, connoting a transcendence beyond the physical. Fragmented quotes, like “sit at the feet of action,” only hint to viewers of the rich body of knowledge Smith references. Left without citation, Smith blurs the authority of authorship and creates intrigue for viewers who are unfamiliar with the words and works of Coltrane and Truth. Their words, which in this case are made synonymous with their knowledges, are championed by the collective of twelve anonymous women who carry the banners across the West. This visually poetic transference of knowledge—between the long dead Coltrane and Truth and a new generation—again reveals Smith’s interest in the immortality and ubiquity of Black thought.



Cauleen Smith, still from *Sojourner*, 2018. Video, color, sound; 22:41 min. Courtesy the artist; *Corbett vs. Dempsey*, Chicago; and Kate Werble Gallery, New York

“Thou must be unmade, and remade, and thou must be made a new creature,” echoes ominously from the small hand radio of a woman listening intently to every word. The radio provides another layer and sensory method of knowledge transference. The radio, like a tool of science fiction, blurs authorship and temporality, allowing for knowledge to be transferred freely from the past, but also opening the space for the speculation of futures. *Sojourner* ends with the women sharing space and, together, they rest into a pose that breaks the fourth wall of the film. The women gaze out and beyond the museum walls, again implicating viewers in this living archive. Smith’s work is generative and generous. She offers an autodidactic cosmology of thought, steeped in the lived experiences of Black people. *Mutualities* functions like an interdisciplinary and multimedia syllabus. It offers endless layers and articulations of thought, memory, feeling, and aspiration similar to a regenerative *Choose Your Own Adventure* game. Even in writing this review, I could not go into the depth of knowledge offered by the exhibition. I mimic Smith’s method in offering tempting fragments for readers to follow back to the source.

Disseminating Black consciousness and alternative ways of being into the public, Smith acts as artist and teacher, revealing the continuity of Black thought and how ideas can claim and transform space and ultimately, reality. *Sojourner* is projected on a large screen in a small, enclosed room with dark purple walls. Installed in the middle of the space is a large structure coated in shag carpet, entitled *SPACE STATION: CHARMED AND STRANGE* (2020). Like the radio, this structure is like an object of science fiction—its tactility allows for viewers to engage the film and be transported into another space and time. As the film fades to black, a disco ball installed on the far wall is activated. Its light, previously lost in the bright and vivid color of the film, is now visible and, for a brief pause, consumes the room. In this moment of stillness, Smith fully inhabits the space of the museum through a galaxy of moving light. This last expansive breath of the exhibition is filled with a subtle tension that alludes to there being more, so much more, to discover outside of the museum walls.

TK Smith
University of Delaware

Tea with Queen and J

By Nicole Dugger

Within this comedy of errors that we call 2020, we should seek good libations and dope affirmations. *Tea with Queen and J* is the podcast that may be just what you need to add some seasoning to your usual gumbo of podcast fare. Every week, these two amazing black women refill their tea cups offering current events as relates pop culture through a lens of black liberation.

Tea with Queen and J is a unique and vibrant podcast described as “two funny womanist race nerds from the Bronx talking liberation, politics, and pop-culture over tea, dismantling white supremacist patriarchal capitalism one episode at a time” (Apple). Clearly signifyin’ on bell hooks, this mission statement is spoken at the beginning of each episode and is meant to provide “the language [and structure] required to remind us, continually, of the interlocking systems of domination that define our reality” (hooks 7). Make no mistake, these amazing women are bold, smart, and unapologetic as regards the positions espoused. From the beginning of each episode, Queen and J let you know what to expect from the analyses and insights offered in the podcast.

Queen and J are two black women hailing from New York City—the Bronx to be specific. They are powerful human beings. They have a charismatic chemistry that, with the oversaturation of podcasts on the market today, is becoming increasingly hard to find within the landscape of podcasting. The two have found a way to stand out from the podcast pack; they offer unique presentations on the day’s selected subject matter. Where most podcasts seem to stagnant, Queen and J find their groove. Audience appreciation of the analyses offered on the podcast stems most likely from the clarity of the duo’s purpose: the dismantling of white supremacist patriarchal capitalism.

Tea with Queen and J starts with the mission statement and, from there, you are in for quite a ride. This thought provoking podcast starts with libations and affirmations. Each week they describe what tea they are sipping and pour libations to the positive things in their lives and in the world. Next, affirmations are given. The affirmations set the tone for the podcast and present engaging ways to foster positivity among

Nicole Dugger holds an MA in English and teaches rhetoric, composition, and literature class at Maryville University.

the listening audience members. The affirmations also function as gifts to be shared with the audience. No topic is off limits; Queen and J examine topics through the lens of womanism, as understood according to the criteria of black feminisms. Queen and J are serious observers of the world. They are proactive as regards topical matters of importance. Moreover, they know how to keep their audience member engaged and involved.

Check out [*Tea with Queen and J*](#) on iTunes, or your favorite podcast platform.

Nicole Dugger
Maryville University

*<https://podcasts.apple.com/mw/podcast/tea-with-queen-and-j/id841142610>

CALL-FOR-PAPERS: FORTHCOMING ISSUE

“Stag Shot Billy!”

Still today, human beings seek to explain their origins and the mysteries of life to secure understandings of their identities through the power of everyday events and occurrences. Archetypal accounts of imaginary happenings and supernatural beings from time immemorable explain the genesis of the universe, the making of a people, the formation of living things, or the advent of an institution. These narratives reflect a certain system of values and codes of self-conduct of a group of individuals bound together by social, political, cultural, and aesthetic ties—and the virtues and vices of being human.

This issue of *Quimbandas* explores mythological stories, figures, and themes from all cultures and historical periods in all areas of popular and scholarly cultures—particularly those aspects of the mythological that have found their ways into some of our most canonical literatures and contemporary polemics. The frequent appearance of mythological motifs in scholarly and popular literatures speaks to the notion that mythologies, far from being relics of the past, continue to have significance. Contemporary approaches and retellings of mythological elements reflect the attitudes of our contemporary moment. Movies, television programs, computer games, comics, graphic novels, traditional literature, visual arts, performing arts, politics, blogs—the list goes on—hold both explicit and implicit renderings of archetypes, such as John Henry and Athena and Kali and William Wallace, and of mythological narratives such as those found in bodies of sacred literatures, classical Malian tragedies, and medieval legends.

Moreover, this issue aims to explore the modes of organization, the fundamental patterns, and the paradigms of human memories that lie at the root of stories, tales, and beings—paradigms that lie at the root of myth and folklore. The main objective of the issue is to bring together those interested in examining the intersections between their professions and/or interests and some distinct local, regional, national, or global aspects related to the folk and folklore, myths and mythology, archetypal characters, situations and symbols and, thus, work to provide integrative approaches to the perceptions and relevancies of long-ago created myths and folkloric tales as regards the twenty-first century and the contemporary moment.

Topics include but are not limited to the following as relates identity formation:

- the functions and cultural impacts of myths, archetypes and symbols
- the locality and universality of myths, archetypes and symbols
- monotheism, polytheism, pantheism
- gods, demigods, heroes, and badmen
- myth, ritual, and the sacred
- holy books and early writings
- myth-revision from antiquity to the 21st century
- mythology and language

- mythology and science
- mythology and religion
- mythology and visual arts
- mythology and music
- mass-media and myth creation
- mythography and mythopoesis
- euhemerism—history and imagination
- patterns, prototypes, stereotypes
- ethos and eidos
- archetypal characters in literature and film
- symbols—context and meaning
- major themes, motifs and symbols
- the meaning and symbolism of colors
- the meaning and symbolism of numbers
- signs, emblems and icons
- semiotics and symbolism
- classical mythology and its reverberations in modernity
- folklore and authored literature
- oral tradition, archaeology, and the lore of material culture
- actuality of myths

If you are interested in publishing in *Quimbandas: Explorations of Identities*, then please submit an abstract to submissions@quimbandas.org by 18 FEBRUARY 2021.

Author Guidelines

Notes for Contributors

Quimbandas is published four times a year, usually as themed, guest-edited issues. The Journal's editors will consider proposals for themed issues AND individual essays. If accepted, the latter will be published in one of the Journal's issues on the website. Print copies will be made available for purchase.

Information about forthcoming themed issues, together with details of the guest editors, is available via the "Forthcoming Issues" tab found under the "Issues" tab.

If you have a suggestion for or would like to guest-edit a themed issue, or would like to discuss the appropriateness of an article for an open issue prior to submission, please contact the Journal's editor, Tarrell R. Campbell.

General Submission Guidelines

Authors wishing to submit to the Journal should first submit an abstract to submission@quimbandas.org. After acceptance of the abstract, authors will be contacted by the editor as relates how to submit full manuscripts. Information about the guest editors of forthcoming issues can also be found under the "Forthcoming Issues" tab.

Once contacted for submission of full manuscript, please submit the following:

1. Author contact details and biography:

- the title of the article
- the author(s)' names and affiliations
- a short biography of no more than 80 words for each author
full contact details (including email, postal address, and phone number) for the corresponding author

2. Article:

- the title of the article
- a summary or abstract of not more than 150 words in length outlining the aims and subject matter
- the article in full, including references
- If images or text in the article require permissions for use, please add evidence that permissions have been secured (receipts, licenses, emails, etc.). We are not able to send out articles for review without these.

Please note: If you are including the details of more than one author on your paper, please ensure that the first-named author is prepared to be "corresponding" author, responsible for communication with Production and handling the proof of your manuscript, if it were to be accepted. If you are unsure of how to order your names, please contact the editors, or the publisher.

Manuscripts should be in English, preferably in Word format. Manuscripts should follow MLA Handbook, 8th edition. Please double-space the entire manuscript, including all notes and bibliographical references, and make sure all pages are numbered consecutively.

Articles may not exceed 8,000 words in length. *Quimbandas* uses footnotes (endnotes preferred); still, we encourage authors to keep notes to a minimum, using their discretion of course. Please print a word count at the end of your manuscript. Word counts should include abstract, all notes and references, and author biographies.

Quimbandas supports an open-review process. We believe in the open and transparent review of scholarly production. Generally, the names of authors will be known to reviewers and the names of reviewers will be known to authors. When requested, the open-review process can be addressed.

Book Review Essays

Each issue of *Quimbandas* contains a book review essay. Book review essays will be coordinated with the theme of the issue. *Quimbandas* does not accept unsolicited book review essays, and does not publish individual book reviews. If you would like to suggest a theme for a book review essay in an open issue, please contact the Book Reviews Editor, Alex Wulff.

Podcast Review Essays

Each issue of *Quimbandas* contains a podcast review essay. Podcast review essays will be coordinated with the theme of the issue. *Quimbandas* does not accept unsolicited podcast review essays, and does not publish individual podcast reviews. If you would like to suggest a theme for a podcast review essay in an open issue, please contact the Podcast Reviews Editor, Nicole Dugger.

Art Review Essays

Each issue of *Quimbandas* contains an art review essay. Art review essays will be coordinated with the theme of the issue. *Quimbandas* does not accept unsolicited art review essays, and does not publish individual art reviews. If you would like to suggest a theme for an art review essay in an open issue, please contact the Art Reviews Editor, Olubukola Gbadegesin.