

Mokhberi's treatment of the *dévots* (devout French Catholics) of the late sixteenth century and their fascination with a crypto-Christian Persia is especially strong; her larger point that the Counter-Reformation saw no one Orientalist way of thinking about the Orient, or even about Persia, is well made. Equally strong is her extended study of the spectacular visit of the Safavid ambassador Mohammad Reza Beg to the French court in 1715, during the last days of Louis XIV. Mokhberi offers a dazzling analysis of the meanings, texts, and subtexts of an early modern diplomatic mission, from its elaborate protocols to the significance of its gift exchanges, speeches, gestures, sights, sounds, and commemorations. Her treatment of this episode is sensitive and well-grounded in the literature of the new diplomatic history, to which these chapters make an important contribution. At the same time, her attention to the popular response to the mission, as recorded in periodical literature, prints, diaries, and other sources provides a rich, added dimension to the account, as we see not just what the Persian embassy did at Versailles but how the visit was read and understood by the broader public.

This is an accomplished study that should be of interest to historians of early modern France and French literature, scholars interested in the long history of Christian-Muslim interactions and exchange, and students of early modern diplomacy.

Margaret Meserve, *University of Notre Dame*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.52

Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World. Suzanna Ivanič, Mary Laven, and Andrew Morrall, eds.

Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700 18. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019. 262 pp. + color pls. €109.

Inspired by Caroline Walker Bynum's widely admired work in medieval religious history, contributors to this volume offer a series of well-crafted essays that historicize objects and practices in several religious traditions, for the most part during the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Late medieval Christianity's sense of matter produced a metaphysical baseline for early modernity, and sometimes as a parallel in non-Christian settings. Protestants pressed against late medieval ontology while Catholics reasserted it in the post-Tridentine cult of relics, saints, and their devotional imagery. Many contributors to the volume explore even more ways in which matter worked the presence of the divine in the material culture of death, in a broad variety of ex-votos crafted from different materials, and in the medicinal use of amber and semiprecious stones.

The designation "early modernity" commonly implies a Western European and North or South American periodicity, but the editors have produced a wider portrayal

of the era by aptly framing the book within the parameters of the global networks that linked Europe to the South, East, and West. Several essays take readers beyond the Catholic and Protestant spheres of Southern and Western Europe to explore relics and pilgrimage among Tibetan Buddhists, the production of Jewish ceremonial objects in New Amsterdam, the material culture of Sufism in the Balkans, Arabic-language amulets in Christian Spain, and the adaptation of Mesoamerican ritual objects to Christian use in the colossal collection of relics assembled by Phillip II. In doing so, the essays collectively demonstrate the important role that material culture played in negotiating the evolving relations of colonial and metropolitan worlds and in the meshwork of religions, racial hierarchies, and economies that comprised these worlds.

This volume is a fine example of what the material turn in historical studies can produce. All of the essays are framed as historical rather than theoretical projects and proceed by historicizing materiality within the coordinates of time and place. The prose is uniformly clear and lends the book to classroom use. Readers will benefit from the authors' careful attention to the material characteristics of the artifacts and practices they study. All of the essays teach in one way or another that matter matters. What things are made of, how they are made, and how people used them come to the fore to demonstrate the difference that the material turn makes in historical work.

Many of the essays manifest one of the major trends in material studies over the last two decades: scrutiny of the agency of artifacts and materials. Images and objects are not coded messages that deliver meaning, but rather social actors. The shift is not merely metaphorical, but driven by the consideration of how materials interact with human beings. Rather than regarding artifacts as placeholders or tags of human intention, the material turn urges historians and social analysts to scrutinize the material affordances of objects—that is, what their particular features enable. This means learning about how images and objects operate culturally, as material culture, as in the social process of religious conversion. Thus, Gabriela Ramos writes about devotion to Our Lady of Copacabana in the colonial Andes, where the Virgin's appeal to indigenous peoples connected to ancient devotion to Mother Earth. Whereas Ramos argues that seventeenth-century evidence of devotional images in the Andes actually blurred social cleavages, Maria Alessandra Chessa examines how different materials in seventeenth-century Italy—papier-mâché versus wax *ex-votos*—marked and conducted class differences. Rachel King discusses the medicinal agency of amber rosary beads among the first generations of Lutherans. Mary Laven investigates the difference that medium played in wax and wood *ex-votos* in Renaissance Italy. Others train their attention on how objects need to be studied in terms of their meandering cultural biographies. Kate Holohan, for instance, tracks the migration of ritual objects carved from jade from Mesoamerica to Spain. Once there, the objects became medicinal.

Each of the book's essays is well informed by a wide range of historical literature, demonstrating that the material turn does not mean leaving any form of evidence behind, but rather adding to the historian's kit the testimony that objects and materials offer.

David Morgan, *Duke University*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.53

A Convert's Tale: Art, Crime, and Jewish Apostasy in Renaissance Italy.

Tamar Herzig.

I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. viii + 388 pp. \$49.95.

Things expose relations in and between societies. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues, "even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context" (*The Social Life of Things* [1988], 5). In *A Convert's Tale*, Tamar Herzig mobilizes early modern things to explore what inanimate objects reveal about the animate world. She looks at and beyond the materiality of bracelets, swords, tabernacles, book covers, buttons, hat badges, pomanders, and fans to rethink how such things represent identity, assert power, and dictate taste.

Herzig presents a microhistory of the renowned goldsmith Salomone da Sesso, who worked in the princely courts of Renaissance Italy. While courtly consumption of luxury goods in the Italian peninsula relied on such urban centers as Venice, Milan, Florence, and Paris, the princes associated with the Ferrarese court salaried a local goldsmith to create objects whose novelty and quality symbolized their political power and social distinction. Cast in precious metals and often decorated in gemstones and colored enamel, the objects attracted attention throughout early modern Europe. The cultural biography of these object insists on their singularity. These sumptuous objects are valuable not only for their fine craftsmanship and material magnificence but also for their historical significance. Archival records confirm that embedded in their shiny surfaces are stories of ingenuity and incarceration, friendship and enmity, sodomy and apostasy.

Salomone da Sesso was a virtuoso goldsmith whose artistic production was coveted by the princely classes. Son of a Jewish moneylender, Salomone gained knowledge of the precious-metals marketplace from the expensive pledges pawned at his family's bank. No extant record details where he attained his professional training in drafting, operating a furnace, and molding, beating, alloying, and incising metals. Nevertheless, Herzig's research indicates that by 1487 Marquis Francesco Gonzaga had already employed Salomone as a goldsmith in the Mantovano region and Duchess Eleonora