

by a search the secret police had conducted in his house. The only suspicious item they could find was his diary. Apparently it did not contain enough evidence to take him to prison, and he even got it back. In an artistic rage, and trying to make sure that his personal notes could not be read again by anyone, he burned his diary.

*The Master and Margarita* remained secret even after his death in 1940, and could not be published until 1966, when the phrase became more frequently used by dissidents to show their resistance to the state regime. In the early nineties, when the KGB archives were partly opened, his diary was found. Apparently, during the confiscation, the KGB had photocopied the diary before they returned it to the author.

The best guardians are oftentimes ultimately the ones you would least expect.

## TRAVELING PORTALS

Mari Lending

In the early 1890s, the *Times* of London reported on a lawsuit on the pirating of plaster casts. With reference to a perpetual injunction granted by the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division, it was announced that “various persons in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland have pirated, and are pirating, casts and models” made by “D. BRUCCIANI and Co., of the Galleria delle Belle Arti, 40. Russell Street, Covent Garden” and consequently severely violated the company’s copyright “which is protected by statute.” The defendant, including his workmen, servants, and agents, was warned against “making, selling, or disposing of, or causing, or permitting to be made, sold, or disposed of, any casts or models taken, or copied, or only colourably different, from the casts or models, the sole right and property of and in which belongs to the said D. Brucciani and Co.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore the public was notified that “any person or persons” with future desires of making, selling, disposing of etc., models or casts from other people’s models or casts “will likewise be proceeded against.”

<sup>1</sup> *Times* (London), June 2, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> *Times* (London), February 14, 1894.

Two years later, the tone had become harsher. The defendant had obviously pursued his dark deeds of pirating, making, selling, and disposing of copies made of copyrighted copies, thus infringing on the earlier ruling. In the new motion the defendant was ordered to file an affidavit of all the casts and models as the sole right and property of Brucciani & Co, return any casts and models to the plaintiff, and carry the full cost of the motion. In addition, the *Times* reported that the perpetrator “might be ordered to stand committed to the Holloway Prison for his contempt in infringing the said Injunction.”<sup>2</sup>

Anglo-Italian Domenico Brucciani, master plaster caster for some of the finest British art institutions, had established a prolific business of architectural monuments, fragments, ornaments, sculpture, and other thinkable and unthinkable miscellanea manufactured in plaster, spanning from fossils to a wide assortment of dismembered body parts. Sculpture and antiquities produced by this distinguished *formatore* could from 1864 on be admired in an elegant gallery in Covent Garden and otherwise be ordered from sales catalogues. From early on, Brucciani was involved in the grand endeavor of building an eclectic, imperial collection of architectural monuments at the South Kensington Museum (from 1899, Victoria and Albert

3 Stephen Bayley, "Plaster cast of Domenico Brucciani's Portico de la Gloria, Santiago de Compostella [sic]," Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/users/node/1977>.

4 *Times* (London), May 26, 1880.

Museum). Among the casts commissioned from Brucciani was the full-scale Pórtico de la Gloria, casted on-site in 1866, noteworthy for dictating the dimensions of the imposing skylit Architecture Courts inaugurated in 1873 (later renamed the Cast Courts), but also due to the superiority of the cast. Today, the V&A praises Brucciani's cast of the twelfth-century cathedral in Santiago de Compostela as "equally magnificent in ambition and execution."<sup>3</sup>

Upon Brucciani's death in 1880, the whole of his "valuable Stock, Moulds, and Store Casts," produced under "Royal and distinguished patronage" was announced for sale.<sup>4</sup> And the stock was certainly valuable, containing molds of the finest monuments at full scale, molds that were not easily reproducible from the monuments in situ due to increasingly strict preservation legislation in Europe. No surprise then that the purchaser, who continued the business as Brucciani & Company, took legal action against one competitor pirating their work by having new molds made from their casts. This plagiarist, working out of Manchester, had been copying casts without even bothering to erase the Brucciani signature on the copied copies before putting them onto the market as cheaper goods. Therefore, and very much like the warning against pirating that introduces most DVDs today, Brucciani & Co reprinted the 1892 announcement from the *Times*, including the newspaper's logo, in their regularly updated series of sale catalogues.

Even though these Brucciani designs were described as meritorious, the lawsuit revolved around minor objects, depicting "foliage, apples and leaves, and groups of peaches" produced for use in art schools. In comparison to the grandiose cast of the Pórtico de la Gloria, they belonged in a different end of the spectrum with regards to scale, complexity, effort, inventiveness, "ambition and execution." They were however original designs and thus subjected to copyright. They were copyrighted copies so to speak, a notion that points to several delicious paradoxes in the phantasmagorical world of nineteenth-century architectural plaster.

The following chapter cuts into the trajectory of the four Norwegian stave-church portals that found their way into European and American cast collections. Curated into collections that were from their moment of conception accused of being hastily arranged "ready-mades," or embedded into rigorous art-historical schemes, the portals came to serve different interests: historical, aesthetic, pedagogical. These copies of fragments of mostly lost originals belong to what has been described as the discredited half of the doublet *originality/repetition*, "the one that opposes the multiple to the singular, the reproducible to the unique, the fraudulent to the authentic, the

copy to the original."<sup>5</sup> Multiplied, reproduced, and fraudulent in the sense that they were translated beyond the material integrity of the wooden originals (with surfaces meticulously worked to look like they had been treated with black tar over a millennium), the casts nevertheless carried an indisputable productive, even projective, dimension. Originating as identical copies made from the same mold or produced in new series of reproductions, the singular cast poses questions of authorship (of the copy) and convey a distinctive individuality, spanning from patination to their shifting contexts. In the course of history, many of the casts have been ruined or lost, and the molds they were made from were long ago worn out and discarded. The museological paradigm in which the traveling plaster portals belonged fell first out of fashion, then into oblivion. Left under the radar of architectural historiography is an elliptic history of dead ends where contexts, objects, and traces of them tend to disappear.

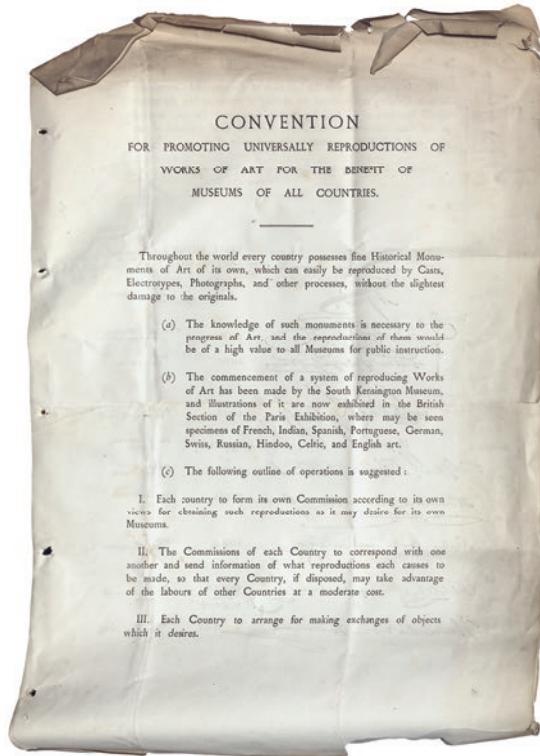
#### PLASTER CASTS AS MASS MEDIUM

One key initiative in the distribution of manifold versions of singular monuments was the "Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of All Countries" that Henry Cole, director of the South Kensington Museum, had fifteen European crown princes sign during the 1867 International Exposition in Paris (fig. 1). In encouraging the production of monuments in media such as casts, electrotypes, and photographs, the convention envisioned an apparatus for the circulation of architecture across the world. Recommendations were given for the formation of national commissions to select each country's most venerable "historical monuments" (thus codifying and canonizing its past), to secure casts for its own museums, and to establish procedures for the international exchange of desired objects. This fascinating document, summing up a decade of similar initiatives from the South Kensington Museum, implicitly theorizes plaster casts as a true architectural mass medium, as well as envisioning a museum without walls based on reproductions whose merits and characteristics could be assessed across time and space. An imaginary museum obtainable "at a moderate cost" and without causing the slightest damage to the originals, as Cole optimistically phrased it in the 1860s, was aptly demonstrated in Paris and referred to in the Convention: "The commencement of a system of reproducing works of art has been made by the South Kensington Museum, and illustrations of it are now exhibited in the British Section of the Paris Exhibition, where may be seen specimens of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Swiss, Russian, Hindoo, Celtic, and English Art."<sup>6</sup>

5 Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass., 1986, p. 162.

6 Henry Cole/The South Kensington Museum, "Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of All Countries."

1 The Norwegian copy of Henry Cole's "Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of All Countries."



Cole's will-to-circulation was an immediate success. Among the fifteen signatories were Prince Oscar of Sweden and Norway, the later King Oscar II, a patron of the arts and founder of one of the world's first open-air museums outside Christiania (today's Oslo), where in 1881 he installed a stave church (Gol), relocated from the valleys. At the "Histoire du Travail" section in Paris 1867, Norway exhibited the salvaged portals from the churches Flå and Sauland, demolished respectively in 1854 and 1860. Cole grasped the occasion, brought the two wooden artifacts with him back to London, had them temporarily displayed, but also cast by Brucciani, who made three copies of each.<sup>7</sup> Stripped of tectonic, structural, and spatial qualities, the portals were converted from architecture into moveable collectables, provided with new functions as aesthetic objects and portable antiquities.

Whether one categorizes the medieval relics as architecture, art, craft, or ornament, their status were radically changed by being moved over the museum's threshold, and attached to the wall. "Given its function as the physical vehicle of exhibition," Rosalind Krauss observes, "the gallery wall became the signifier of inclusion and thus can be seen as constituting in itself a representation of what could be called *exhibitionality*, or that which was developing as the crucial medium of exchange between patrons and artists within the changing structure of art in the nineteenth century."<sup>8</sup> Despite their alluring three-dimensional appearance and promise of transition and interiority, the gallery wall became of crucial importance for the perception of these nineteenth-century image-objects. Both as originals and copies they worked exclusively from one side (the front), with a few noticeable exceptions (in the Musée de sculpture comparée in Paris, plaster portals were framing the openings between the galleries, thus miming lost structural and spatial qualities and echoing their previous load-bearing function). Normally they were placed shoulder to shoulder with doors, porticos, and portions of façades, materializing as collage or three-dimensional wallpaper, in conspicuous disregard for a door's most obvious function.

However, the apparently realistic effect of the casts, documenting in three dimensions what photography could only grasp in two, was interestingly distorted by inventive installations. The V&A, for instance, has displayed Giovanni Franchi's 1867 electrotype of Ghiberti's baptistery doors from Florence within the doorway of the façade of San Petronio in Bologna, while the three arches in the Pórtico de la Gloria cast still serve as frames for doors from other buildings. Such juxtapositions certainly do reveal matters of scale and powerful displacements. They also insist on the self-referentiality of the plaster cast museum. Plaster cast portals are doorways leading nowhere.

7 As noted in handwriting in the Inventory of 1868, bought for £10 each ("All subsequent copies £6 each"). Numbered '68.-10 and '68.-11, their provenance, production, and the purchase is described already the next year in *Catalogues of Reproductions of Objects of Art, in Metal, Plaster, and Fictile Ivory, Chromolithography, Etching and Photography*, South Kensington Museum, London, 1869, p. 36.

8 Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Space," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 133.





Museum depicts Brucciani's Flå cast awkwardly propped against a protruding wall, casually placed between casts of the two-horse chariot from the Vatican and Pisano's pulpit from the cathedral in Pisa (fig. 3). When the Cast Courts were later rearranged, it was mounted in the "North European and Spanish Court" side by side with the Ål portal, produced in Christiania and acquired in 1882, and the Urnes portal, purchased from the Bergen Museum in 1907, among Gothic and Romanesque artifacts. Practical and logistic problems would, however, often lead to exceptions and taxonomical collapses, sometimes resulting in unexpected poetic effects. The three portals are still to be found behind the full-scale Trajan's Column (cast in 1864), albeit cut into two sections, hovering over the Northern European and Iberian specimens.

In the Musée de sculpture comparée in Paris, planned by Viollet-le-Duc and opened for the public in the Palais de Trocadéro in 1882, the Norwegian portals introduced the Romanesque galleries in a display that emphasized style and evolution more than geographic origin. This collection is often referred to as French, as opposed to the global scope of the V&A collection.<sup>12</sup> Yet, explicitly based on Johann Joachim Winckelmann's theory on the periodical development of art, the original program of comparison involved both Greek and Roman casts as well as "sculptures étrangers" from the seventh through the eighteenth century, to contextualize the advancement in French medieval and Renaissance architectural sculpture.<sup>13</sup> Curated exclusively of plaster white reproductions—without miming the originals' materiality to ease the stylistic comparison—it displayed "séries complètes" unachievable in a museum of originals. Installed in enfilade galleries and arranged so that one could simultaneously

3 Domenico Brucciani's fresh cast of the Flå portal as installed at the South Kensington Museum. J. Davis Burton, "South Kensington Museum, North Court, north-west corner, showing architectural casts, view towards Pisa Cathedral pulpit," stereoscopic albumen print, 1868.



catch glimpses of Greek, Roman, "foreign," and French monuments through door openings, even the nonspecialist visitor apparently should have immediately realized that the scheme of childhood, adolescence, and mature perfection repeated itself in the French context. The style-based scope of development and comparison makes the Trocadéro catalogues compelling reading. It is less the objects per se than their formal, relational affinities of similarity and difference that is at stake. For the "portails des églises de bois de la Norvège à Urnes, Sauland et Flaa" the description concentrates on stylistic resemblances and influences, particularly mentioning Byzantine monuments, Carolingian manuscripts and arabesques, the portals of the Chartres and Saint-Denis cathedrals, as well as Irish ornamental art, and ancient symbols from the Isle of Man.<sup>14</sup>

Founded in 1886, the Musée d'art monumental in Brussels showcased a similar chronological and style-based arrangement, however without emphasizing a national core. The Flå and Sauland portals were displayed in the "Art roman" section in the Grand Hall, as part of a panoramic showcase of a "Histoire générale de l'art monumental." The Urnes casts were purchased from the Bergen Museum in 1907.<sup>15</sup>

### IN THE PROVINCE OF REPRODUCTIONS

In 1889, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York could report a certain chaos from being flooded by boxes "coming from different establishments, situated in different cities of Europe from Naples to Christiania in Norway, and containing nearly 1,000 objects, large and small," and steadily increasing due to new shipments from Paris, Berlin, and other cities.<sup>16</sup> Between twelve and twenty men were busy around the clock to have the goods installed, fulfilling the bequest of the late Levi Hale Willard, whom upon his death in 1883 had left the Met \$100,000 to make a Museum of Architecture of casts. After three extensive European journeys, architect Pierre le Brun, purchasing agent for the Willard Commission, was convinced that cast collections represented "a completeness and unity not found possible in museums of originals."<sup>17</sup> In the chronologically ordered Great Hall, placed in the central loge under the North gallery with the Norman, Romanesque, and Byzantine casts, were the two stave-church portals Flå and Ål, both cast by the Guidotti brothers in Christiania. The Ål portal was from the same series the Kongelige Frederiks Universitet (Royal Frederik University) of Christiania donated to the V&A in 1882 (fig. 4), while the Flå portal was a new edition made from the original that had been returned to the university collection of antiquities after it had been on loan at the South Kensington Museum

12 The non-French casts were omitted in 1937 when the collection was reinstalled in the new Palais de Chaillot at Trocadéro, and renamed Musée des monuments français. Unfortunately, the many photographic series the museum commissioned of the casts, among them the Neurdein Frères' documentation of 1,600 casts that were circulated as postcards from 1900 on, focused mostly on the French monuments. The five-volume photographic album of the collection prepared by M. Marcou, archivist at the Commission de monuments historiques, deliberately leaves out the non-French casts in the galleries, as they were considered well known. Paul Frantz Julien Marcou, *Album du Musée de sculpture comparée*, vol. 1: *Époque Gallo-romaine – XII<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1897, preface.

13 As was the case for the first short-lived Musée des monuments français (1795–1816), displaying French monuments salvaged from the frantic vandalism of the revolution. On Alexandre Lenoir and Winckelmann, see Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, New Haven and London, 1993, p. 242.

14 Camille Enlart, *Le Musée de sculpture comparée du Trocadéro*, Paris, 1911, p. 113.

15 For descriptions of the Flå and Sauland casts, see Henry Rousseau, *Promenade méthodique dans le Musée d'art monumental*, Brussels, 1902, pp. 30 and 32.



16 “2nd and 3rd Interim Report,” signed the Chairman of Sculpture and Casts, March 8 and November 7, 1889, Cast Collection Files, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives (hereafter cited as Cast Collection Files, The Met).

17 Pierre Le Brun’s report to the Willard Architectural Commission, August 14, 1885, Cast Collection Files, The Met.

18 *Special Committee to Enlarge Collection of Casts: Report of Committee to Members and Subscribers, February 1, 1892*, New York, 1892, p. 5.

19 “Report of Mr. Edward Robinson,” November 13, 1891, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 9.

20 Letter from Matthew Pritchard, assistant director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, to Mr. Longfellow, April 20, 1905, Box 4 FF 111, Hall of Architecture archive, Heinz Architectural Center library collection, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh (hereafter cited as Hall of Architecture archive, Carnegie). Pritchard was at the time passionately fighting to get rid of the casts in Boston. For an account of Boston’s “battle of the casts,” see Alan Wallach, “The American Cast Museum: An Episode in the History of the Institutional Definition of Art,” in *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States*, Amherst, Mass., 1998.

after the 1867 International Exposition in Paris and replicated by Brucciani in London. Upon its inauguration in November 1889, the Willard Collection was already imposing. However, the initiative led to bigger expectations, actually aspiring to a “complete,” nothing less than “THE MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTION OF CASTS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD,” as the Special Committee to Enlarge Collection of Casts spelled it out in capital letters in a note dated February 1, 1892.<sup>18</sup>

The boldness of this enterprise might evoke Jorge Luis Borges’s cartographer who attempts to make a 1:1 map of the world. The ambition was however remarkable, as it also tended to inverse one of the typical reasons given for collecting casts in the US, presenting the Grand Tour for those who could not see the monuments firsthand. The Metropolitan collection will have “European scholars to come to New York as they now go to Rome, Athens, or the other great centers of the study of art, in order to see the perfect museum of reproductions,” according to Edward Robinson, purchasing agent for the “complete collection,” and director of the Metropolitan Museum from 1910.<sup>19</sup> Another fascinating inversion might be identified in the Grand Tour Robinson himself undertook in the summer of 1891, visiting London, Berlin, Dresden, Naples, Palermo, Florence, Milan, among other cities “within the province of reproduction.” Robinson’s 1891 *Tentative Lists of Objects Desirable for a Collection of Casts, Sculptural and Architectural, Intended to Illustrate the History of Plastic Art* had been sent to directors, archaeologists, and curators from principal museums and to prominent formatori prior to his journey. Testifying to the success of Cole’s vision of the exchange of monuments among museums, this initiative also bears witness to a dream of infinite expansion, with Robinson planning to augment his imaginary museum with a series of monuments never before cast. It was while still refining this “organic whole” that the Metropolitan in 1907 purchased the Urnes portal from the Bergen Museum, and installed it in a setting described as “perfect” and “ideal,” only years before the dismantling of the collection began.

#### READY-MADES

“If disposed of hastily, the Institute will obtain the most conventional of ready-made collections,” the assistant director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston warned in 1905, two years before the grand opening of the Hall of Architecture at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.<sup>20</sup> In hindsight, it is exactly the ready-made quality that makes the Pittsburgh collection so captivating. Andrew Carnegie was determined to have a major collection of casts installed in his hometown museum



4 The Ål portal cast by the Guidotti brothers in Christiania (Oslo), ca. 1881, acquired by the Musée d’art monumental, Brussels; the Musée de sculpture comparée, Paris; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the South Kensington Museum, London. Here installed in the West Cast Court at the South Kensington Museum, n.d.

just as the display of architectural monuments in plaster was about to fall out of vogue. His director John W. Beatty set up the collection at a remarkable tempo. The documents surrounding its planning reveal few explicit aesthetic or historical deliberations for a collection that has remained virtually unchanged and thus presents itself as a perfect monument of a deserted museum form. Most of the goods were ordered from catalogues and most often by cablegrams, to save precious time, and the 1907 collection is unique also in the way it mirrors the decreasing international cast market at the time.

21 Letter from John W. Beatty to Gabriel Gustafson, August 13, 1906. Box 3 FF 101, Hall of Architecture archive, Carnegie.

22 Letter from John W. Beatty to Gabriel Gustafson, June 5, 1906, Hall of Architecture archive, Carnegie.

23 Letter from Gabriel Gustafson to John W. Beatty, August 6, 1906, Hall of Architecture archive, Carnegie.

24 Letter from Gabriel Gustafson to John W. Beatty, October 19, 1906, Hall of Architecture archive, Carnegie. The same year that Henry Cole had the Convention signed in Paris, he commissioned the electrotype of the doors of the baptistry in Florence from Giovanni Franchi, which later become a reference in an increasingly heated debate on the casting process's damaging of the originals as gold leaf from the Gates of Paradise came away with the molds. For an interesting discussion on this aspect of casting, see Bilbey and Trusted, "The Question of Casts," p. 469.

25 Haakon Shetelig, *Norske museers historie*, Oslo, 1944, p. 42.

26 Letter from Gabriel Gustafson to John W. Beatty, August 6, 1906. A receipt from J. Carpanini for "Church portal formed and cast, 370 kroner," dated June 6, 1893, found among unsorted letters in the archives in what is today the Kulturhistorisk museum in Oslo. At least one more cast from the same series has survived in the museum's repository.

For the mandatory stave-church portals, Beatty was "particularly anxious" to secure the Ål portal, which, as he would know from the Metropolitan's catalogues, was produced by the Guidotti Brothers in Christiania.<sup>21</sup> "A reproduction of this monument is included in the collection of casts of which I have charged on the behalf of Mr. Andrew Carnegie for the Hall of Architecture in the new building of the Carnegie Institute shortly to be dedicated," he demanding-ly instructs Gabriel Gustafson, director of the department of antiquities at the Historisk museum in Christiania.<sup>22</sup> Gustafson explained that most of the collection was then in storage, soon to be installed in a new museum building in Oslo, that the casts were out of circulation, and that it was out of the question making new molds, "because the door has suffered by earlier copies."<sup>23</sup> "In general we take no such copies anymore, because the old wooden things are suffering thereby," Gustafson mentioned on several occasions, contrary to Henry Cole's envisioning of a global museum of reproductions manufactured without causing "the slightest damage to the originals."<sup>24</sup> However, he could offer the impatient Beatty a fine exemplar of Sauland, still in stock, and one of "our best, greatest most complete and most characteristic doorways" (actually the ceiling heights were tailored to the six-meter-tall portal in the new museum where the original is still on display).<sup>25</sup> Again, this was not the same version of the Sauland portal cast by Brucciani in the late 1860s (which is now in bits and pieces in the attic gallery used for storage in the Casts Courts in the V&A), but one from a new series, most probably manufactured in 1893 by Josef (Giuseppe) Carpanini, another Italian émigré formatore working for the department of antiquities in Oslo: "This copy in gypse uncolored you can get for the prize of 95 dollars incl. packing, freight and assurance delivered in New York."<sup>26</sup> Eventually the deal was concluded, and the portal shipped from Christiania in four crates on the steamer *Oscar II* on October 5, 1906, arriving in Pittsburgh via New York. Incrusted in Pittsburgh in a much lighter brown nuance than both the original and the Brucciani cast, the Sauland portal is still part of a splendid spectacle of portals mounted against the inverted imagined exterior of the Mausoleum in Halicarnassus.

### SPOLIA AND GHOSTS

The Flå and Sauland portals were cast for the first time in London in 1867, about a decade after the structures they belonged to were demolished. The Ål cast was manufactured in Oslo in 1882, two years after the church was torn down. While both the salvaged portals and the casts testify to loss and decontextualization, the fourth Norwegian stave-church portal that became a staple in international plaster

cast collections is still to be found on the Urnes stave church in the Sognefjord on the west coast of Norway. The church dates back to approximately 1130 and appeared on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979. Apparently, then, the original portal can still be admired in its original context.

Yet, the question of origins and display unfolds in exhilarating ways in the trajectory of the Urnes portal. Already the epithet "North" hints about its early displacement. In his 1837 *Denkmale*, J. C. Dahl had ventilated the idea that the north portal, placed next to two pilasters and flanked by a circular column on the external northeast corner of the nave, might originate from an older building. This matter was far from settled when archaeologist Haakon Shetelig, in his invitation to museums in Europe and the US to subscribe for casts, argued that the exposed fragments were unique remains of a lost group of hundreds of eleventh-century stave churches. In 1907, knowing that he had sufficient funding to go through with the enterprise, he had eight casts of the door with doorway, the two pilasters, and the corner column made and shipped to museums in Christiania, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, London, New York, and Glasgow.<sup>27</sup> Thus, prior to the 1909 publication of his dissertation on the "Urnes style," Shetelig could promote casts of "the oldest sculptural parts of the church Urnes," explaining that examinations have proved that the parts had been moved and reinstalled: "Specimens of this style are nowhere else present in such a large size or by such an excellent work, and the carvings of which we intend to make a cast are consequently of the greatest archaeological and historic importance."<sup>28</sup> Thus, the theory that the excessively ornamented portions came from an older building traveled also in print, through international museums' constantly revised catalogues of casts. "Built into the north side of the wooden church of Urnes in western Norway," says the V&A Urnes entry, while the Metropolitan Museum's final catalogue of 1908 stated: "DETAILS, of carved wood, built into the wall of the timber church (Stavkirke), and said to be from an older building, previous to the eleventh century."<sup>29</sup> Successfully, Shetelig used the casts to disseminate the theory of recycled fragments that already had a history of exhibition, in situ, in the conspicuous exposure of some of the former church's most elaborate parts. Employed as spolia, substantially cropped to fit into the lower sidewalls of the new church, the internal order of the fragments had been rearranged in ways it is impossible not to consider as aesthetically motivated, beyond the practical reuse of high-quality building materials. Danish archaeologist Knud J. Krogh has recently documented the vanished

27 The endeavor turned out to be a success, also economically, as accounted for in the 1907 annual report from Bergen Museum.

28 Letter from Haakon Shetelig to the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, June 18, 1907, MA/1/B1186, Victoria and Albert Museum Registry (hereafter cited as V&A Registry).

29 Entry 1596–1599, *Catalogue of the Collection of Casts*, New York, 1908. The 1910 catalogue is a reprint with a new preface.



30 Knud J. Krogh, *Urnesstilens kirke*, Oslo, 2011, p. 187.

31 Letter from Francis Beckett to Haakon Shetelig, February 2, 1931, Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling archives, Statens Museum for Kunst.

eleventh-century church, and the hidden reminiscences of “a long lost totality” conceived as “one magnificent, continuous art work,” with lavishly ornamented friezes, tympanums, doorways, columns, pilasters, and other fully architecturally integrated details, before being modified to the dimensions of the 1130 church.<sup>30</sup> Shetelig kept one set of the Urnes casts for his own museum, and mounted the fragments of the former west façade in a way that somewhat evokes the ghost structure that is still covered under 900-year-old panels (fig. 5).

Den Kongelige Afstøbningssamling (The Royal Cast Collection) in Copenhagen had turned down the offer of the Urnes casts in 1907, something the new director Francis Beckett severely lamented when in 1931 he asked Shetelig if he would consider producing a new series of casts.<sup>31</sup> Eventually the Copenhagen museum was shut down and the casts buried in storage. However, in the 1980s archaeologist Jan Zahle excavated, revived, and reinstalled the Danish cast collection. Adding to the metaphor of the graveyard that persistently has adhered to the museum for at least two centuries, the mass grave appears pertinent to describe the warehouse in the Bronx where the Urnes portal in the 1980s resurfaced among other relics of the Metropolitan’s “complete” collection.

In 1991, after more than half a century in limbo, the portal crossed the Atlantic again, heading toward its desired spot among the medieval monuments in Copenhagen. A cramped space and a narrow stairway in the end made it impossible to mount the portal at its

5 The Urnes portal with door and two planks, made in 1907, as installed in the Bergen Museum, 1954 (destroyed in the 1980s).



intended place, and the Metropolitan cast is now placed behind two of the frequently displaced San Marco horses, again testifying to the poetic, unruly, and often accidental juxtapositions that characterize these collections (fig. 6).

### MOVING MONUMENTS

Architecture is inherently resistant to both collecting, displacement, and display: “There are numerous antique monuments which can not be dragged into museums—great architectural works and monuments, whose meaning is so profoundly interwoven with the place where they were erected that removing them will cause a serious loss,” stated the 1845 membership invitation for the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments.<sup>32</sup> The late nineteenth-century cast collections, however, championed the idea of the movable monument.

In London, the plaster portals became part of a global collection of post-classical architectural sculpture; in Paris, they were embedded into a rigorous style-based art-historical scheme; in New York, they were inscribed in the most ambitious endeavor ever within the “province of reproduction”; and in Pittsburgh, they were part of a context that also displayed the decreasing market of monuments as commodities. But not only were these replicated monuments moving between distinctive and transitory totalities, they also took on their own individuality while moving around. While the Metropolitan’s stave-church fragments purchased in the 1880s were treated to have

32 Published in the weekly *Skilling-Magazin*, April 5, 1845.



6 Metropolitan Museum of Art’s pale Urnes cast (acquired 1907 from Bergen), as reinstalled behind two of the San Marco horses, at the current Royal Cast Collection in Copenhagen.



33 Letter from Edward Robinson to the director at the Bergen Museum, July 5, 1907, Cast Collection Files, The Met.

34 Letter from Haakon Shetelig to V&A, June 18, 1907 and several notes in a minute book dated 1907, MA/1/B1186, V&A Registry.

35 Letter from Haakon Shetelig to Gabriel Gustafson at the Historisk museum in Oslo, December 19, 1907, Copy book 1907–1909, University Museum of Bergen Archives.

\*A warm thanks to Eirik Erstad, Lars Danielsen Holen, Linda Ørbekk Nikolaisen, and Ingrid Dobloug Roede, whom within my seminar “The Art of Collecting Architecture” at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Spring 2013, became contaminated with archive fever and obsessed by stave-church portals cast in plaster. Excavating the remains of the plaster portals takes passion, imagination, and vigor, as not only are many of the objects long lost, but also most of the documentation of the commissioning, production, and circulation of the casts. Yet, from scattered archival reminiscences they tracked down ruins of plaster portals in storage and portrayed the work of Italian-Norwegian formators in Christiania. Their final essays are printed in M. Lending and V. Plahte Tschudi, *Arkitekturdepoter: Piranesistikk og stavkirkeportaler*, Oslo, 2013.

the surface look like ancient tar, Edward Robinson preferred to have the Urnes ensemble “in the color of the plaster, not painted in imitation of the old wood.”<sup>33</sup> This might (if though too late, one would think) be inspired by the Trocadéro ideal of the “teinte uniforme” of the bright plaster casts, allowing for comparing architectural ornament in a way that neither original works nor patinated reproductions would allow for. Shetelig’s offer of painting the casts “in the dark color of the wood” was turned down by the V&A, who instead requested a sample in plaster “painted so as to show the general tone of the color of the original,” to have the finishing done in London.<sup>34</sup> The Urnes casts that traveled to Christiania were colored in Bergen: “The color might appear very dark; it is, however, similar to the original.”<sup>35</sup> Thus the profound surface disparity in the resurrected pale and corpse-like Metropolitan Urnes portal later relocated to Copenhagen, the almost black version in the V&A cast courts, the long-lost crispy white example in Paris, and the simultaneously coated Christiania and Bergen versions (the first in a ruined state in storage in Oslo, the second destroyed in the 1980s) testifies to the singularity of the multiplied copy.

Conceived as portable documents in three dimensions, the reproductions of the Flå, Sauland, Ål, and Urnes portals were crucial for the invention of their lost contexts as monuments, as the multiplied originals toured the world through museums and catalogues.

## THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMAGE AND SKIN

Adam Lowe

There are times when the territory changes so fast that new groupings, new intellectual affinities, new ways of working, and new strategies and protocols are required. The way we value and experience cultural heritage is in one of those phases now. In this apophenic environment it is easy to bestow connections and importance where none exist and to project personal obsessions where they have no relevance. Generalizations are not very useful, so let’s be specific. What are these changing circumstances?

In no particular order, here are a few:

- The rapidly growing maturity of digital mediation both in terms of hardware and specially developed software targeted to niche interests.

- Digital information is inherently synesthetic and this fact is transforming many areas of creative work.

- The rapid rise of 3-D output (3-D printing or rapid prototyping). From printing buildings to human body parts, this developing technology has the potential to transform the world we inhabit.

- Virtual learning environments (VLEs) are changing academia. Information is more freely available than ever before. Opinions are more informed, more individual, and far more varied than previous generations’, which were more dependent on the official facts obtained from printed publications.

- A change is occurring in the way we understand originality and aging. This applies both to ourselves and to the things we make, and to the way we think about conservation and preservation. From botulinum toxin to hyaluronic acid, from Paraloid (acrylic resin) to solvents, the materials used in acts of aesthetic improvement of skin and paint play an active role in conditioning our aesthetic judgments.

- Materials science is an emerging subject of great importance, both at an atomic and genetic level and in terms of how we relate to a physical world.

- The breakdown of the material-based divisions between artistic practice (paint, print, sculpture, woodworking, ceramics, metalworking, film, etc.) and the rise of different groupings based on creative intention.