

‘Indian’ objects in Medici and Austrian-Habsburg inventories

A case-study of the sixteenth-century term

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This article broadly addresses how German and Italian collectors communicated and regulated foreignness. More narrowly, it discusses textual signifiers of foreignness, specifically the terms Indiana, alla Indiana, dell’Indie, Indien and Indianische in German and Italian inventories drawn up between 1580 and 1750. A study of the inventories of the gifts and palaces of Medici Grand Dukes and Holy Roman Emperors confirms the long-held view that the term ‘Indian’ connoted objects not only from the Americas and India, but also from Africa, China, Japan, and the Levant. Through an analysis of the term ‘Indian’ and two case-studies tracking Indian objects, we reveal the complexity of this term and the necessity of carefully considering the language and context of inventories.

PRINCELY collectors in early modern Italy and in German-speaking lands took a close interest in objects from Asia and the New World. These rulers collected not only Hindu ‘idols’ but also Mexican codices, Bengali textiles, Mixtec masks, rhinoceros horns, incised coconuts, feather paintings, and chests inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The inventories of the Habsburg *Kunstkammern* at the imperial palaces in Prague and Vienna as well as inventories of the Medici palaces in Florence reflect this princely enthusiasm for objects that originated across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. In these collections New World and Asian artefacts mingled with other forms of exotica (Sapi ivory salt cellars, Turkish shoes, Persian rugs, and Japanese armour) that collectors imagined were emblematic of certain cultures. Objects from these diverse sources were all, at one time or another, called ‘Indian.’ For instance, in two inventories tracking the entry and exit of goods in Cardinal Ferdinando de’ Medici’s collection in Rome from 1571 to 1588, the terms *Indiana*, *alla Indiana*, and *dell’Indie* were used variously to define objects from the Americas, India, and Asia. A variant of these terms was also employed by inventory-takers of German princely collections. In the 1607–11 inventory of Emperor Rudolph II’s *Kunstkammer* in Prague, numerous entries describe objects from the New World, China, India, and Africa as *Indianisch*.

This study examines the functions and meanings of *dell’indie*, *indianisch*, and similar descriptive terms within a group of Medici and Habsburg inventories from the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. Inventories recording the makeup and organization of these princely collections are peppered with references to objects that hailed from the ‘Indies,’ betrayed ‘Indian’ workmanship, or exhibited an identifiable ‘Indian’ style. Focusing on the inventories of the gifts and palaces of Medici Grand Dukes Cosimo (1519–74), Francesco (1541–87) and Ferdinando I (1549–1609), Emperors Rudolph II (1552–1611), Matthias I (1557–1619), and Empress Maria Theresa (1717–80) reveals that ‘Indian’ connoted objects not only from the Americas and India, but also Africa, China, Japan, the Levant, and even Europe. The fact that ‘Indian’ defined terms as diverse as Mexican featherwork, Sinhalese mother-of-pearl chests, African weapons, Hebrew manuscripts, Mughal miniatures, and Chinese porcelain highlights both the problems in relying on inventories for identifying objects and also the complexities of this early modern term. By way of two case-studies, one concerning the movement of Mixtec masks in Medici inventories and the other about an Indo-Portuguese aspersorium that was recorded in three Habsburg inventories, this article suggests methodologies useful in deciphering the

terms used in describing objects that originated from beyond Europe, and offers new ways to approach the role of exotica in early modern princely collections. We also seek to combine knowledge of the objects and the inventories to show how those involved in the collection of exotica made sense of 'Indian' objects and why the term was used. Before entering into these detailed investigations, however, it is first necessary to situate this study within the complex historiography of early modern European collecting of exotic objects, to explain the concentration here on German and Italian collections from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and to consider the term 'Indian' itself.

Statement of the literature

'Indian' objects that were incorporated into early modern collections have received a great amount of scholarly attention, beginning at the close of the nineteenth century – with the establishment of many of Europe's ethnographic museums – up to the present day. As the storerooms of European palaces were combed to fill the galleries of nascent ethnographic museums, curators discovered a treasure trove of remarkable artefacts from around the world. Gem-studded masks, feather mitres and ceremonial fans were brought out of obscurity and laid before curators anxious to build the reputation of their young institutions. Convinced that many of the objects were Pre-Columbian in origin, curators turned to sources documenting the earliest contacts between Europeans and Amerindians. In the case of the Habsburg collections in Vienna, curators and scholars went directly to Hernan Cortés's (1485–1547) lists of the gifts sent by the Aztec ruler Montezuma (1466–1520) to King Charles I of Spain (1500–58), later Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.¹ The number of New World objects found in Austrian Habsburg collections, their unmatched standards of craftsmanship and their supposed Mexican origin, together with a growing awareness that Charles V had presented a number of objects from New Spain to family members and close allies – all contributed to scholars' preoccupations with connecting these artefacts to the Aztec ruler. The objects found in Vienna, along with many other New World artefacts in Italy and Spain, began to be seen as authentic exemplars of New World sover-

eignty, artisanal dexterity and abundant wealth.² At the end of the nineteenth century, then, building an appreciation of the 'Indian' objects involved not only recovering their historical proximity to Montezuma but also discerning an inherent similarity to the applied arts of Renaissance Europe.³

With a low success-rate in wedding 'Indian' objects from princely collections to Cortés's list, scholars began turning their attention to inventories of early modern *Kunstkammern* and *studioli*. Inventory entries – such as 'a white cover from the Indies embroidered completely with a trim of white silk' (a *colcha* discussed in Barbara Karl's essay elsewhere in this journal) from Grand Duke Francesco's inventory and 'an indian axe, whose handle is made from wood, the axe from stone, which was once used by a Moorish King, according to the label seen next to it' from the 1596 inventory of the archducal *Kunstkammer* at Ambras – called out to find their corresponding objects in the material world,⁴ and scholars strove to couple the two. On one side, then, were inventories, replete with vague and (to a modern reader) confused statements; on the other side were the objects, in all their specificity and complexity. Scholars such as Karl Anton Nowotny and Christian Feest, who studied the Habsburg collections, and Detlef Heikamp, who focused on the Medici holdings, pored over hundreds of folios of inventories dating to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and succeeded in bringing many inventory entries and objects together in plausible relationships.⁵ The impetus behind this pairing was the hope of ascertaining the age of 'Indian' objects; the means by which they entered Europe; and the significance the objects held for their princely collectors.

The quincentennial celebration of Christopher Columbus's voyage fostered a vast literature that attempted to reassess the impact wrought on the world by the Genoese navigator's expedition.⁶ With a new emphasis on cross-cultural encounters, the early modern exchange of ideas between Europeans and Amerindians, and the formulation of cultural differentiation, the positivistic drive in the scholarship directed to collecting the New World began to wane. Instead of scrutinizing inventories in an effort to anchor objects to a particular moment and place, scholars now looked directly to the artefacts in order to understand how they appealed to new sets of European cultural expectations and to a rapidly expanding world view.⁷

According to researchers such as Elke Bujok, Adriana Turpin, and Isabel Yaya, it was not the interest of princely collectors in understanding European culture as similar to or different from the unknown cultures in the 'Indies' that kindled the princes' collecting impulse but rather the novel and marvellous aspects of the plants, animals, and objects living among or produced by these foreign cultures.⁸ In this view, their collecting enterprise cannot be disentangled from the knowledge-producing capabilities of wonder. Persuaded by the notion that princely collecting practices register an early modern epistemic rupture, scholars often usefully compare the Medici and Habsburg collections of exotica to the collections of natural philosophers, such as Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605) and Athanasius Kircher (1602–80), in order to demonstrate a courtly interest in the study of nature and foreign cultures.⁹

Sensitive to the differences between various collectors and natural philosophers, Deanna MacDonald and Lia Markey (amongst others) have argued that knowledge produced by collecting New World objects was inextricably linked to the princely collector's personal interests, whether it be a desire to document nature or an ambition for imperial expansion. Through examination of specific case-studies, these scholars contend that the process of transfer and recontextualization of objects from distant places and cultures was not simply a product of early modern curiosity, but could sometimes constitute a propagandistic claim on the places from which the objects hailed.¹⁰ To put it another way, in the display of exotic objects, the collector could experience these other worlds virtually or vicariously. In addition to ascribing considerable metonymic power to New World objects, these studies have also pointed to the various ways in which objects brought back from exploratory expeditions allowed collectors who were not directly involved in the colonization of the 'Indies' to insinuate themselves into the expansion of European and specifically Christian power.

Still other writers have claimed that the decontextualization and transfer of New World objects to Old World collections was crucial to the process of defining modern Europe. According to Peter Mason, Anthony Pagden, Stephen Greenblatt and others, objects from the New World helped to delineate European culture.¹¹ Furthermore, the very presence of native artefacts in the space of the collection constitutes for them

positive proof of Europe's burgeoning colonial interests in the Americas and the East. Thus, in this view, the history of collecting forms the opening passage of a story of the subjugation of the East and West Indies.

As a result of their migration from South Asia and the Americas to the Medici and Habsburg collections, these objects took on distinct biographies that contributed to the ways in which they were understood at their respective courts. By way of their recontextualization, these same objects entered a new system of value as circumscribed by German and Italian cultural expectations. In the words of Igor Kopytoff, 'what is significant about the adoption of alien objects – as of alien ideas – is not the fact that they are adopted but the way they are culturally redefined and put to use.'¹² Be that as it may, it would be problematic in a short study of this type to use inventory entries documenting ethnographic artefacts and foreign luxury objects to make broader claims about what goods from the 'Indies' meant to early modern Europeans.¹³ The individuals given responsibility for recording the objects were themselves products of a particular historical setting, and therefore verbalized their thoughts about the objects according to its epistemes. To uncover what objects from Asia and the Americas meant to a broader swath of early modern Europeans would necessitate analysis of a wide spectrum of goods imported from Asia and the New World as well as travelogues, economic treatises, political texts, plays, poems, and novels. Our study is much more circumscribed, being concerned primarily with how in Medici and Habsburg inventories the term 'Indian' fixed a chaotic mix of visual and cultural information into one semantic statement. Accordingly, this essay sketches the history of the term; points to the assorted things it denoted and connoted; and reconsiders the complex relationship between the term and the unknown and far-flung lands for which it stood. But why only examine these particular inventories?

Not coincidentally, the Austrian Habsburgs and the Medici possessed a similar relationship to the New World and to Asia as well as a comparable approach to collecting goods and artefacts from these regions.¹⁴ Both the Italian peninsula and the German city-states lacked the resources and the nautical power in relation to Spain and Portugal to conquer and colonize. The rulers of the German-speaking lands and of Tuscany instead cultivated mercantile relationships with the regions and peoples, forgoing any

clearly defined political claim over them. Despite the fact that these rulers were not directly engaged in the colonization of the 'Indies', they were no less interested in goods produced, grown, and manufactured in these regions than the sovereigns of Spain and Portugal. Indeed both Christian Feest and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend have demonstrated that a large percentage of the objects from South Asia and the Americas that entered Europe in the sixteenth century were collected by European rulers who were not involved in colonization – namely the Austrian Habsburgs, and the Medici Grand Dukes.¹⁵ Furthermore, these same princes were engaged in a circle of gift giving, meaning that they not only exchanged exotica with one another but also shared a language of collecting. It is for these political, cultural and linguistic reasons that the inventories of Medici and Habsburg rulers provide a fertile ground for comprehending the meaning of 'Indian' in early modern inventories.

The meaning of 'Indian'

The word 'India' comes from ancient Greek by way of Sanskrit and derives from a word that denoted the geographical area around the river Indus. The people of this region in turn became known as Indus (and Hindus) and then subsequently Indians. Citing Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains that in sixteenth-century English 'Indies' was 'used allusively for a region or place yielding great wealth or to which profitable voyages may be made.'¹⁶ Curiously, the early seventeenth-century Italian dictionary of the Accademia della Crusca does not include an autonomous definition for 'India', 'Indie', or 'Indiano', although it uses these terms in certain other definitions. By this time 'India' had come to refer to a nonspecific place of abundance and was equated with our modern notion of exoticism. This multifarious adjective which we find in early modern European inventories evolved over time and its meaning can best be understood through a chronological examination of its use.

In his seminal article of 1942, 'The Marvels of the East', Rudolf Wittkower traced the idea of India from the fourth century BC through the medieval period. He concluded that during this *longue durée* India was construed as a 'land of marvels' replete with anthro-

pomorphic monsters and fantastical animals.¹⁷ It was Greeks, particularly the fourth-century BC author Ktesias of Knidos who first described the mythical hybrid creatures of India. Yet the precise location of 'India', its topography, and the makeup of its population remained uncertain in the West until Alexander the Great entered the region.¹⁸ Despite the information produced by Alexander's campaign, later Greek and Roman writers—such as Solinus and Pliny—continued to believe that the land to the east was inhabited by dog-headed persons and monopeds.¹⁹

In the medieval period India was considered not only to be the land of monsters but was also, paradoxically, thought to be the location of paradise; India, according to medieval geographers, was Eden.²⁰ After all, in the Book of Genesis God announced that he had created the garden in the east. Yet at the same time, as Partha Mitter has shown in his analysis of the travel accounts of Marco Polo and Odoric of Pordenone, 'classical monsters and gods, biblical demons and Indian gods were all indiscriminately lumped together' in the fourteenth century.²¹ Marco Polo loosely defined the geographical boundaries of India, including in his description of the region not only modern day India but also large parts of East Asia and Africa.²² Even though Polo liberally circumscribed the borders of India and even though he, like his other contemporaries lumped together the fantastical beings of classical mythology, the Bible, and Hinduism, Polo's text ushered in a novel proto-ethnographic approach to examining foreignness as well as a new definition for 'India.' When Polo wrote of India, he recorded the 'beasts and birds' and 'idols,' as well as the region's people, commenting on the nudity of India's inhabitants in the summer months, their use of various nuts and methods of harvesting pearls.²³

Christopher Columbus studied Polo's writings before embarking on his westward voyage to Asia.²⁴ It is no wonder, therefore, that on 2 June 1492, upon reaching the Caribbean the Genoese navigator wrote to the King and Queen of Spain informing them of their control over *las tierras de India*.²⁵ He had landed, so he thought, on the shores of the land Polo explored. In the letter, Columbus described the area not just as the 'lands of India' but as 'the Indies', *Las Indias*, since he had found that the area was comprised of a series of islands. Just a few weeks later in his logbook, Columbus wrote of the 'language of the Guanahani Indians' and like Marco Polo before him, Columbus

deployed the word 'Indian' and then went on to describe them as 'naked people'.²⁶ Here then already in Columbus's first descriptions of the New World and its inhabitants the descriptive term 'Indian' entered the nomenclature used to define the people and things of the newly encountered lands and the word 'Indies' as a term for their location. News of the 'Indies' and of the 'Indians' was disseminated swiftly and soon others, such as Giacomo Trotti writing to the Duke of Ferrara in 1493, referred to the lands to the west as the 'islands of India'.²⁷

Subsequent navigations proved that the newly encountered lands were not part of Asia and explorations and conquests provided a variety of names for the new territories. The Cantino map from 1502, made by an anonymous Portuguese cartographer, labels the Caribbean as 'the Antilles of the King of Spain' and a large portion of what is now South America with 'all this land was discovered on behalf of the King of Spain', demonstrating that the map, in part, functioned to delineate Spanish and Portuguese borders.²⁸ Five years later the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller labelled the continent 'America' after Amerigo Vespucci. It was not until Magellan's circumnavigation (1519–22) that the New World was definitively separated from Asia in the minds of many Europeans.²⁹ By 1535, following the conquest of Mexico and Peru, these lands officially became known as the viceroyalty of New Spain and Peru. As knowledge of the territories across the Atlantic grew, maps began to include more specific information and incorporated indigenous names of settlements and regions. In the frescoed map of the western hemisphere in the Terza Loggia of the Vatican from 1583, Egnazio Danti identified Mexican towns with their Náhuatl names, such as 'Xalisco' and 'Panuco'.

Though many other names were given to these lands encountered by Columbus, 'the Indies' remained the primary nomenclature for the Americas throughout the sixteenth century. In his study of 'New World Nomenclature', Edward F. Tuttle has shown that in the sixteenth century the addition of 'from India' was the most common way to define something as foreign.³⁰ For instance, the name for a turkey in various tongues in the sixteenth century—*pavo de las Indias* in Spanish, *coq d'Inde* in French, *gallo d'india* in Italian, and *indianischer Hahn* in German—translates as 'hen from the Indies' or 'from

India.' Tuttle explains: 'Inasmuch as India called up the East more than the West, it is not surprising that the folk were led to associate New World products, at least nominally, with the pre-existing Islamic sources of the exotic.'³¹ Yet it was more than just 'pre-existing Islamic sources' that were being connected to the New World but also longstanding beliefs associated with the idea of wonder and abundance derived from ancient sources.

Not surprisingly, there was a good deal of confusion regarding the origin of many objects from the New World, and as late as the 1580s goods and people from the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East continued to be muddled. An example is found in several of Giovanni Stradano's engravings, designed in Italy and printed in Antwerp, that represent different hunting practices throughout the world. In them, the artist indiscriminately put feather skirts on figures representing indigenous people of India, Africa and the Americas;³² in the *Dragon Hunt*, natives of Egypt donning feather skirts decapitate enormous lizards that have crawled on to giant texts inscribed with faux-Hebrew, merging fantasy with an attempt at ethnographic representation. Because these feather accoutrements are most reminiscent of those worn by the Tupinamba tribe of Brazil, William Sturtevant has coined the term 'Tupinambization' to define the displaced and anachronistic nature of the skirt.³³ Stradano would have seen the feathers on Americans in prints produced in the early sixteenth century. In his engraving he chose to represent not only New World inhabitants, but all other 'Indians,' in feather skirts.

The conflation of things from the Indies and from other parts of the world in images and text occurred for several reasons. First, as is evident from Stradano's imagery, a long tradition of conceiving of the Indies as a fantastical place of hybrids flourished into the sixteenth century; secondly, 'Indian' had a political connotation and could refer to all goods coming from lands under Iberian control, whether in Asia or the New World; thirdly, poor communication between indigenous people and Europeans meant that information about objects was not always transferred. Daniela Bleichmar, writing primarily of botanical goods travelling from the New World explains that products lost their indigenous meanings en route and became 'global goods' ripe for interpretation in their new European context.³⁴ The same can be said for

objects that travelled across the seas, whether they were mother-of-pearl, coconuts, featherwork, or paintings: no matter where these goods came from, they often became 'Indian'. It was up to the collector and more often the compiler of the inventory to name them.

Maschere di legno alla indiana

Between 1553 and 1595, several 'Indian' masks were listed in Medici inventories compiled by court secretaries during the reign of three Grand Dukes in Florence. While art historians and anthropologists have endeavoured to link the citations in the inventories to specific extant masks in the Museo Pigorini in Rome (Fig. 1) and the British Museum in London, no study has closely interpreted the language used in the inventories to describe these masks in their Italian context or compared these descriptions with other accounts of such objects from the period.³⁵ The Indian masks in Florence, generally described in inventories as being 'composed of turquoise on wood', are faces of Mesoamerican gods with intarsia-work in turquoise and other precious stones on a wooden frame. Thought to have been worn by priests who served to represent gods in the religious rituals of the inhabitants of Mexico in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, these objects took on new meanings in their European context. An examination of the Medici inventories and the travels of these masks throughout the reign of three dukes and then into the collection of Ulisse Aldrovandi in Bologna reveals the complex afterlife of these 'Indian' objects. The descriptions of the masks change subtly over time as do their locations, possibly indicating differing responses to or conceptions of the masks under different collectors. This case-study makes clear that the term 'Indian' in Medici inventories acted as a generic signifier for something non-European and reveals the problems of relying on inventories to comprehend the motivations and knowledge of the collector. At the same time, our analysis of the changing description of these masks in the Medici inventories in comparison with the documents of Aldrovandi and Wittelsbach Duke Albrecht V (1528–79), paying particular attention to variations of the term 'Indian', provides critical insight into the significance of this one type of object and demonstrates that while the inventory entries might be general, knowledge of the specificity of the



Fig. 1. Mixtec mask, Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Etnografico 'L. Pigorini', with permission from the Soprintendenza al Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Etnografico 'L. Pigorini'.

provenance and function of the masks was never lost.

Cosimo de' Medici, who ruled first as Duke of Florence from 1537 until 1564 and then as Grand Duke of Tuscany until his death in 1574, acquired at least two Indian masks in the 1550s. In 1539 Cosimo married the Neapolitan-born Spanish princess, Eleonora da Toledo. Their wedding gifts no doubt included exotic goods from the New World, presented by Spanish and Habsburg family members, who in turn had received such goods from the court of Emperor Charles V (as discussed by Alessandra Russo in this volume). The Medici Mixtec masks are first listed in 1553 in the twelfth cabinet of Cosimo's 'secret *guardaroba*' or storeroom in the Palazzo Vecchio, amongst other small-scale items such as bronzes by Andrea Sansovino (1467–1529) and Baccio Bandinelli (1493–1560). Described vaguely as 'masks that came from India composed of turquoise on wood', there is no reference to their specific provenance, number, function or style and the fact that 'India' is used here rather than 'Indies' indicates that there might have

been uncertainty regarding from which India they derived.³⁶ The masks were not the only 'Indian' things owned by the Medici from the New World. An inventory from 1539 lists amongst other goods both Moorish and from India, two feather robes *d'India* under the heading *abiti da maschera* or 'masquerade clothing', objects subsequently identified with two Tupinamba robes surviving today in the Anthropological Museum of Florence.³⁷ The 1553 inventory also includes *Indiane* animal heads made of precious stones that according to a marginal note in the inventory, were borrowed by Benvenuto Cellini.³⁸ Clearly then these masks, like the animal heads, were accessible to members of the court. Medici court architects might even have been inspired by Cosimo's Indian masks when in the 1560s they designed decorative faces resembling the masks for the grotto at Castello, the same villa where Cosimo and Eleonora were growing maize acquired from the New World.³⁹ It is clear from the presence of these Mixtec-style masks in the grotto, where they were interspersed with a design of Medici grand-ducal crowns, that these 'Indian' objects were admired by court artists and were associated with princely splendour.

In subsequent inventories from Cosimo's reign, the masks moved locations within the collection and the number of masks changed from entry to entry. It is difficult to know whether this fluctuation in their categorization in the collection was haphazard, as has been proposed by Isabel Yaya, or deliberate as Adriana Turpin has suggested, since little evidence exists to direct us one way or the other.⁴⁰ In the 1553-5 inventory of goods (Fig. 2) entering and exiting the collection two masks *d'india* are catalogued among jewellery including 'eight Indian emeralds' and 'three Indian animals, one of amethyst and two of agate', indicating that perhaps the shared Indian provenance of these works, whether New World or South Asian, was significant to the cataloguer or collector.⁴¹ In a general inventory of the collection organized by object type and dating from 1560 to 1570, similar masks are listed on four separate occasions under different dates. In the first three entries, dating from 1560 and then 1564, the 'Indian' descriptive is omitted completely: they are listed as 'two wooden masks covered in turquoise,' and ultimately catalogued amidst the *cose de maschere* or 'things for the masquerade'.⁴² A third entry dated 1567 lists 'four Indian masks' also with the *cose de maschere*,⁴³ a term inferring that these

masks, like the feather robes in a previous inventory, might have been used in court spectacles and may even have been worn at certain events. Then in 1570 two masks are listed amongst silver-mounted glassware as 'two masks in wood covered in turquoise stone and other *alla Indiana*'.⁴⁴ The descriptive has now changed from *venuta d'India* or from India and the simple *Indiana* to *alla Indiana*. In the same inventories we find similar descriptives such as *alla Ungherescha* and *alla Turchescha* which connote the style of the object. We have to assume that although the description has changed subtly these are the same Mixtec masks, only reconceived now as being in the 'Indian style'.

In Cosimo's final inventory at the time of his death in 1574, the objects are described as 'masks in wood, 2 in number, *all'indiana* full of turquoise stones' and located along with a variety of goods including fish-teeth, leather drinking vessels, and gloves.⁴⁵ The two masks are now located in the eleventh cabinet in Cosimo's *Guardaroba Nuova*, a new collection space comprised of cabinets decorated with maps of different parts of the world.⁴⁶ Medici court artist and art historian Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), describing the *Guardaroba Nuova*, explained that Cosimo wished

... to put together once and for all these things both of heaven and earth, absolutely exact and without errors, so that it might be possible to see and measure them separately and all together, according to the pleasure of those who delight in this most beautiful profession and study it.⁴⁷

Yet due to Cosimo's illness at the end of his life, this ideal space for 'study' did not come to fruition. The objects were organized neither by provenance nor type. The Mixtec masks, now called *all'indiana*, were not placed in the cabinet decorated with the map of New Spain but remained amongst a hotchpotch of goods of different media in the eleventh cabinet. Yet Vasari's words indicate that the provenance of objects like the Mesoamerican masks was significant to Cosimo, who sought to make sense of the world represented in his collection.

The masks remained in this same eleventh cabinet throughout the rule of Cosimo's son, Grand Duke Francesco. The contents of the cabinet and the description of the mask changed only slightly in Francesco's 1587 death inventory where the masks were listed simply as 'two masks in wood *alla Indiana*'.⁴⁸ There is no mention of the turquoise stones here, indicating that the inventory maker was copying and

19

1553

Entrata

Uno Gioiello in serapiola a guisa d'occhio d'acuffa coperto Pietre cioe	n°	1
Uno diamand in lunta	n°	1
tre smeraldi no buoni	n°	3
tre Rubini et in tutto estimato a dieci sc°	n°	3
Uno salicino d'agata e corniola legato in oro smaltato co figurine di peso d'6. 10.	n°	1
Vna Saliera d'agata fornita d'argento con quattro dero di Borse in sua cassa di cuoio n°	n°	1
Vna scodella di diaspro co orle da pie di agto	n°	1
Sette zette di Varij Animali 3 indiani vna di donna rista e 2 di agata, laltre vna di Plasma vna di cor nuola e 2 di agata	n°	7
Uno granchetto di corniola di nlicco	n°	1
Vna cassetina di Pietra fine co cornice di legno d'ac°	n°	1
Vna scatolina quadra con foglia da rubini	n°	1
Vna fasciolina di tela legata con 7 vetri che hanno virtua	n°	1
Vna Roccia di Berilli capelata i nlichio in sca tolino fo. to di v. to verde	n°	1
Vna maschera uenuta d'india composta di turchine sep. el legno	n°	1
Quattro pezzi di pietra picoli luno di diaspro, laltre di calamita, d'agata e 1 di legno petrificato	n°	4
Qua manichi di pugnale di diaspro verde	n°	2
Uno pezzo di diaspro toscano	n°	1
Uno quocio d'acchi no finito di diaspro e calidoni	n°	1
Quin pettolini di diaspro e calidoni i vno sacchetto per far vno scacchier	n°	1
Dal 11mo a 12mo sig. Quia addi 9 di marzo 1553. Vna maschera di legno uenuta d'india composta di turchine e sua cassa di cuoio n° recò d'ordeno scader al prez. 16. a 37	n°	1
Dal 12mo addi 7 di marzo 1553. Vna tazza lunga e co delitropia co v. salire intagliato tra Bernardo Batti ni e sua cassa coperta di corduano al prez. 16. a 89	n°	1

Fig. 2. Inventory of goods entering and exiting the Medici collection, 1553-4. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Guardaroba medicea 30, fol. 19, with permission from the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.

abbreviating Cosimo's 1574 inventory and/or was uninterested in the turquoise. This is curious since one of Francesco's primary interests as a collector was in precious stones. His *studiolo* in the Palazzo Vecchio, a collection space unfortunately without an extant inventory, was comprised of cabinets to hold gold, silver, coral, bezoar stones, and other rich materials and most probably was organized by material.⁴⁹ Francesco's *casino* (a building type examined by Lisa Tice in this volume), another collection space in a facility separate from the Medici palaces, included workshops

for alchemical experiments and for the manipulation of different substances. The fact that the Indian masks remained in Cosimo's *guardaroba* and were not transferred to Francesco's *casino*, where he housed many 'Indian' objects from the New World, Asia and India, including featherwork, furniture, nuts and bed-covers, suggests that the masks were of little interest to him.⁵⁰ Possessing, storing and inventorying an object did not necessarily mean that the collector was passionate about it. The fact that other objects in his *casino* are well described but that this inventory entry listing the

mask in the Palazzo Vecchio is relatively simplistic suggests that Francesco may not have even known about the mask in the Medici collection.

Under the rule of Francesco's brother, Grand Duke Ferdinando, inventory evidence demonstrates that one mask was manipulated and moved. The 1595 inventory of the Palazzo Vecchio from Ferdinando's reign lists one mask in poor condition in a cabinet in a different room in the palace, simply citing: 'Mask in mosaic *al'Indiana* broken.'⁵¹ The fact that a mask is now listed as being damaged reveals that it must have been used or handled in some way. The notation regarding the transformation of the mask in the inventory is unusual since the condition of objects in Medici inventories is rarely cited.⁵² It is possible that the destruction of this Mexican face of a god – an idol after all – was intentional and that its citation as 'broken' in the inventory was also purposeful. These types of indigenous objects were destroyed at the court of King Philip II, who called for an obliteration of the religious beliefs of Mexico and Peru. As Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando was a subject of the King and would have sought his favour. Yet contrary to Philip, Ferdinando actively (though perhaps covertly) preserved the history of New Spain. Besides collecting an abundance of featherwork pieces, both paintings and mitres, Ferdinando also owned at least one important Mexican book, the *Florentine Codex*, a proto-ethnographic study of New Spain written by Franciscan friar, Bernardino de Sahagún, and illustrated by indigenous artists. Sahagún's book was banned by King Philip but made its way to Ferdinando for safekeeping.⁵³ Therefore it is unlikely that Ferdinando would have ordered that the mask be destroyed. He could have read about the Mexican gods portrayed in the mosaic masks in Sahagún's illustrated manuscript, where they are illustrated and described in great detail in Book One. The masks' meaning, perhaps lost under Cosimo's and Francesco's reigns, could have been rediscovered at Ferdinando's court thanks to this important source. Perhaps their fragility and their use at court either in masquerades or as objects of artistic analysis caused the evident damage. There is no evidence of these 'Indian masks' in Medici inventories following Ferdinando's reign and interest in the New World waned following his death in 1609.

Ulisse Aldrovandi, a scientist and collector in Bologna in frequent correspondence first with Francesco and then with Ferdinando, was an avid collector of

Americana and probably acquired one of the Medici mosaic Mexican masks in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, perhaps as a gift from one of the Grand Dukes. One mask is illustrated and described in Aldrovandi's posthumous *Musaeum metallicum* (1648), which documents much of the *naturalia* and *artificialia* in his collection with text and image.⁵⁴ Though not an inventory *per se*, this text, like his *Monstrorum historia* (1642) discussed similarly by Toubia Ghadessi in this volume, is organized much like an inventory in that it catalogues each object by type. Here Aldrovandi illustrates (Fig. 3) and describes the mask within his discussion of mosaic:

The Greeks termed this type of work *Asarotos* [mosaic floor], so called, as some people think, because the remains of dinner used to be swept off such pavement; but for our discussion, *lithostrota*, which by our people are usually called tessellated works, that is, constructed from various shells and bits of stone, or rather pebbles of different colour, is more suitable, as was stated a little earlier. But it is amazing that in the Indian Histories Gomara recalls that masks were certainly made by Indians from wood, then decorated

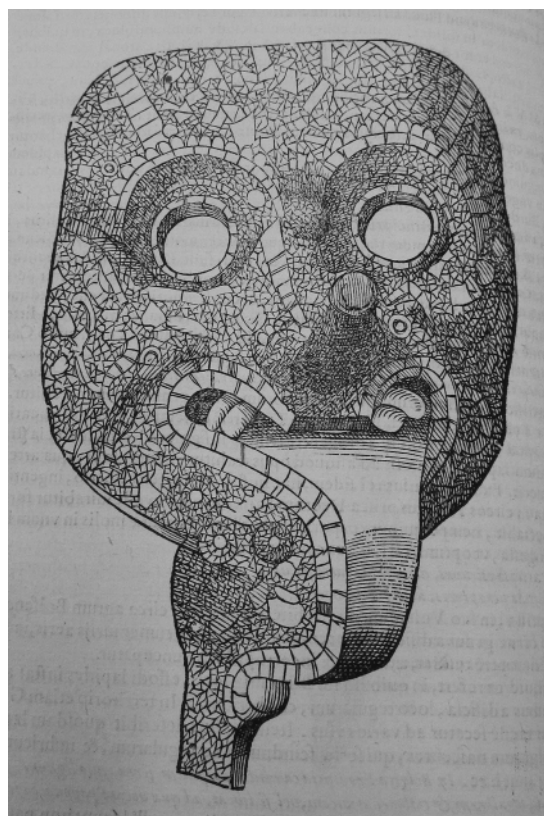


Fig. 3. Illustration of the Mixtec mask from U. Aldrovandi, *Musaeum metallicum* (1648).

with pebbles of divers colours in such a way that they rival tessellated work very beautifully. For which reason we show an image of this mask for the pleasure of the reader.⁵⁵

The Indian mask here is appreciated for its aesthetic beauty and its skilful construction. Aldrovandi explains that he has learned about the mask from Francisco Lopez de Gomara's *History of the Indies*, first published in Spanish in 1552 then translated into Italian and dedicated to Duke Cosimo in 1556. In a section on New Spain, Gomara explains that two conquistadors exchanged clothing and saddles with Indians for, among other things, 'three masks of gilded wood with turquoise stones that appear to be works of mosaic.'⁵⁶ While it is difficult to know, based on inventory entries, how the Medici conceived of such Mixtec masks, it is clear from Aldrovandi's text that through research he knew the provenance of the object and the history of its production.

None of the descriptions of these Indian masks in Italy makes reference to their use in their original context. German inventory entries briefly describe the purpose of these masks. Johann Baptist Fickler's 1598 inventory of the collection of Duke Wilhelm V (1548–1626) of Bavaria describes: 'An Indian man's hat covered with red and white rings made of bones, two devil faces on top, a cover hangs from the back, it appears to have been worn by the pagan high priests.'⁵⁷ Then a later citation from the same inventory recalls more precisely the masks in the Italian collections: 'A mask covered in turquoise and unidentifiable red stones, with two leather bands, like the one an Indian priest used to cover the face.'⁵⁸ Here then the modifier 'Indian' has shifted from the object itself to the man or priest who wore the mask. In the first entry Fickler indicates that the priest is pagan and the faces on the mask are devils: this additional information provides considerable evidence of the conception of Indians in the German context and is remarkably different from the more general descriptions in the Medici citations.

In May of 1572 Francesco de' Medici sent eleven chests of various objects from around the world to Duke Wilhelm's father, Albrecht V.⁵⁹ An inventory of these goods was written up both in Italian upon their departure from Florence and in German at their arrival in Munich. The texts are extremely close. An example of one of the most detailed entries reads in Italian: 'An idol in human shape composed of different

chosen seeds made in Mexico, where people not only worship it, but also sacrifice human beings to it.' The German entry, though also quite detailed, is slightly different in the description of the object's material: 'On the inside an idol made from soft material / people from Mexico, or a similar people, not only to pray to it, but also give to it human offerings.'⁶⁰ The entries both describe the function of this idol and remark upon the inhuman acts of the indigenous people. The word 'Indian' is not used here. Instead the inventory writer specifically cites Mexico as the place of origin of the object. Other objects listed within this gift package, such as a mother-of-pearl table, are described as being from 'India'. Some of the parrots in the gift inventory, unspecified whether from India or Brazil, 'speak Indian'. This inventory demonstrates that in some cases specificity of the provenance of the object was an important criterion for something listed in an inventory and some information of the use and meaning of these objects was available to the Medici. Francesco's inventory listing the goods sent to Duke Albrecht demonstrates that the collector was cognizant of the origin and original use of these objects.

We can conclude then that though 'Indian' was used to describe the Mixtec masks in the Medici inventories, their Mexican origin, like the objects sent to Duke Albrecht which were described in much greater depth, might have been well known. The nature of the long palace inventory was obviously very different from the short inventory attached to this prestigious gift and obviously did not warrant as much information. Through this examination of the Mixtec masks' movement and classification in the collections of various Medici dukes and then of Aldrovandi, paying close attention to the language used to define them and to their location amidst other similar or dissimilar objects, some insight can be gained regarding the value and categorization of the objects. The inventories tell us that the masks might have been revered as much as sculpture and jewellery, that they may have been used in masquerade events at court, and that one was left broken. Though the masks changed ownership, functions, and locations over a century, knowledge of their origins remains unstated until Aldrovandi's publication which linked these Mexican objects to antiquity and recognized both their artistic and historical value.

Ein indianische Nuß

As mentioned briefly above, some of the so-called 'Indian' objects that Francesco bestowed on Duke Albrecht V were not from the New World but from South Asia. For example the first trunk contained 'a small vessel of an Indian nut [a coconut] on which a variety of things are carved' and the tenth trunk enclosed 'eight Indian nuts, on their shells sitting Indians find their sour juice to eat, and drink, and make.'⁶¹ Coconut vessels such as these, which were carved in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) by indigenous artisans and mounted on European crafted mounts, were popular amongst European princely collectors. In the 1570 inventory of Cosimo de' Medici's belongings 'a nut from India mounted in silver with its foot in silver' is recorded, and a coconut drinking vessel in the shape of ship was listed in the 1571-88 inventory of Ferdinando de' Medici's holdings.⁶² Coconuts, however, were not the only objects from South Asia that were sought after and displayed. The 1598 inventory of the Munich *Kunstkammer*, catalogues over twenty objects that came from South Asia, including a rosary made from 'Indian beans',⁶³ while a trunk adorned with intricate inlays of mother-of-pearl that harboured a 'small green idol' was among the dozens of objects from South Asia owned by the Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand II (1529-95).⁶⁴

Despite this documented princely interest in objects from South Asia, when scholarly attention has been drawn to 'Indian' objects in collections it has often been with the purpose of coming to grips with Europe's relationship to the newly encountered lands across the Atlantic.⁶⁵ Scholars infrequently entertain the notion that these linguistic signifiers of a distant and unfamiliar place might not refer to the New World at all, but to a region that Europeans had first alighted upon as early as the fifth century BC and repeatedly engaged with for a millennium—namely 'India'.⁶⁶ For this reason, we chose to examine a South Asian object. It is also hybrid in nature, and scholarship on collecting in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century courts rarely addresses the implications of such objects—objects that fused the labour, materials, and aesthetics of two or more cultures.⁶⁷ In instances when discussions of hybridity are advanced, they are quickly dismissed. The logic behind this dismissal is as follows: inventories do not make note of objects that display cultural mixing, therefore early modern viewers

of hybrid objects did not recognize them as such.⁶⁸ Here we concern ourselves both with the extent to which these mixed objects were registered in inventories and the scholarly implications of relying on inventories in making large claims about the visibility or invisibility of hybrid objects in collections or other cultural contexts. How does the term 'Indian' encourage us to see these cultural mixtures in a skewed light? To begin to answer this question, the current section focuses on one Indo-Portuguese object that was recorded variously in three inventories of the Habsburg imperial *Kunstkammer* over a period of roughly 140 years.

The object in question is now considered to be an aspersorium (Fig. 4) – a vessel holding holy water used in ritual sprinkling – crafted in South Asia by indigenous and Portuguese craftsmen in the middle of the sixteenth century.⁶⁹ Typically, Indo-Portuguese manufactured objects fall into four broad categories: objects produced in India that display Portuguese influence over the choice of subject matter (such as the *colchas* discussed by Barbara Karl in this volume); objects crafted in Portuguese territories of South Asia by indigenous craftsmen (furniture and liturgical items in silver and ivory); objects that were crafted both by indigenous and Portuguese craftsmen either in South Asia or in Portugal (such as the aspersorium discussed here); and objects manufactured by Portuguese craftsmen who relied upon South Asian prototypes (such as mother-of-pearl chests and game boards).⁷⁰

A telltale sign of the aspersorium's Indo-Portuguese manufacture is the unadorned lip of its silver mount, which bears an inscription from the book of Psalms. It reads *SITIVIT ANIMA MEA AD DEU[M] FONTE[M] VIVU[M] QUANDO VENIAM ET PAREBO ANTE FACIEM DEI* (My soul thirsteth for God, for the living fount: When shall I come and appear before God?).⁷¹ Deeply incised vertical and horizontal ornamental bands with vegetal motifs form an irregular grid on the coconut. The lattice serves to organize and hem in a variety of painstakingly carved fantastical beasts, fish, plants, and birds standing in profile. Interrupting this framework are two gilt-silver bands engraved with concentric circles that hug the vessel and extend from the plain circular foot to the lip. A black rhinoceros-horn handle is also fitted to the lip and crowned with a suspension-ring mounted on a rectangular base. Polished to a shine, the smoothness of the horn distinguishes the tactile quality of this container. We can imagine its



Fig. 4. Aspersorium with bezoar stone within, KK 913, Kunsthistorisches Museum mit MVK und ÖTM.

user grasping either the handle with one hand or cupping the textured coconut with two. In addition to the ornamentation on the outside of the vessel, a bezoar stone is fixed to the bottom of the container, whose medicinal or apotropaic properties may have rendered doubly potent the holy water this object was supposedly intended to hold.

The earliest inventory entry recording the object did not explicitly address the manner in which culturally and aesthetically distinct elements were, literally, melded together in the aspersorium. The entry in

question appears in the 1607–11 inventory of Rudolph II's *Kunstammer*, which was housed in Hradčany palace in Prague. Compiled during Rudolph's lifetime, the inventory is organized systematically according to three divisions: *naturalia*, *artificialia*, and *scientifica*. Unlike other sixteenth-century inventories of German princely *Kunstammern*—such as the 1596 inventory of the archducal palace at Ambras and the 1598 inventory of the *Kunstammer* at the ducal residence in Munich—the 1607–11 inventory of the imperial *Kunstammer* often does not indicate the precise locations

of the objects in the chamber.⁷² Instead the objects are, for the most part, grouped according to function and material, with the exception of what we now refer to as ethnographic artefacts which were both given a designated category and appear under headings from 'Silk painted with needles' to 'all types of peculiar four footed animals, fish, and bird bones.'⁷³ The aspersorium under consideration here was recorded under the heading 'Indian nut vessels' (*Indianische Nussgeschirr*) and 'Maldivian nuts' (*cocchi di maldivia*), along with eighteen other mounted and unmounted coconut objects including a coconut ornamented with the raising of Lazarus, fitted with a tall silver mount.⁷⁴

Daniel Fröschl (1563–1613) artist, antiquary, personal adviser to Rudolph II, and primary author of the 1607–11 inventory of the imperial *Kunstammer* in Prague, recorded the aspersorium as '1 Indian nut in the shape of a small pot, the kernel mounted on gilt silver.'⁷⁵ Here, as in the heading under which the object was placed, the descriptive term 'Indian' identifies the type of nut the object is crafted from and it discloses the object's origin from a place outside of Europe. Additionally, the entry draws attention to the aspersorium's form as well as the raw material of its mount. Neither the ornamentation of the coconut, nor the rhinoceros-horn handle, nor the bezoar stone inside the vessel (all of which were already incorporated into the object) are mentioned. There also appears to be no suggestion that the object was intended to serve a religious or liturgical function, nor does the entry convey that the object's particular cultural heterogeneity was in any way remarkable.

We who are confronted with this immense inventory today can sympathize with Fröschl's brevity. In order to write a more lengthy description of the object that accounts for its composite character, it is necessary first to recognize its culturally heterogeneous elements and then to organize a fluid description. Does one discuss its function first? Should the description begin with the bezoar stone inside the vessel, the inscription on the lip, the ornamentation of the coconut, or the unique handle? Confounding such effort is an unshakable uncertainty about the relationship between the biblical passage on the lip of the vessel and the imagery carved into the coconut. Were these elements of the object randomly paired together? Could there have been a connection between this particular Psalm and the variety of anomalous and hybrid forms covering the coconut? And what do

we make of the rhinoceros horn and bezoar stone? Was their inclusion motivated by a desire to benefit from their assumed properties? In all likelihood, inventory entries of objects such as this are so vague partly because their authors balked at the strenuous process of describing them.

But inventory entries that account for the objects in a vast collection like Rudolph II's are, according to modern standards, imprecise for yet another reason. These lists were compiled primarily for accounting for the moveable property of a ruler. Typically, entries are composed of no more than two sentences that register, through their economical use of words the object's form and material, and occasionally its perceived origin.⁷⁶ Over time, different aspects receded into the background or stood out in the minds of different authors. For instance, the 1619 inventory of the *Kunstammer* of Rudolph II's successor and brother Emperor Matthias I, which was penned by the Saxon envoy Friedrich Lebzelter, lists the aspersorium as 'A pot, mounted in silver, a mixture.'⁷⁷ Remarkably, the most salient feature of the object that was mentioned in the previous entry – the fact that it was an 'Indian nut' – is absent in the entry that post-dates it by only eight years. A coconut, apparently, is not once and forever 'Indian.' Additionally, there is no mention of gilding. Instead the entry highlights the composite character of the object, but it does not explicitly convey that the aspersorium is a product of cultural mixing. This 'mixture' may be referring to the fusion of animal (bezoar stone), plant (coconut shell), and mineral (silver) elements in the object, instead of the way it brings together culturally distinct materials and craftsmanship. What this entry does tell us is that the object, by way of its 'mixture,' stood out from the norm, and this required acknowledgement but no explanation.

Remarkably, our Indo-Portuguese aspersorium was not mentioned in a Habsburg inventory thereafter for over 120 years. By 1750, when the object is recorded in the imperial *Schatzkammer* in Vienna, we encounter yet another set of characteristics that enabled it to be identified and located. The eighteenth-century compiler recorded it as 'a large coconut, formed into a vessel for holy water carved in the old way (*auf alte arth*) with flying and running animals, inside a bezoar, with a handle, the mount of silver and inscription on the lid.'⁷⁸ In this entry, like that of 1619, the object's South Asian origin is not addressed.

But unlike the 1619 and 1607–11 entries, specific characteristics of the object are highlighted. In 1750 the object's liturgical function is brought to the fore. The carved animal motifs on the coconut's surface are noted, as well as the bezoar stone, the handle, and the inscription. What is most surprising about the 1750 entry, however, is the way in which the style of the coconut's ornamentation is read as outdated. Here, it is the object's age that is remarkable not its 'Indian' provenance nor its exotic material. Furthermore, the entry implies that the manufacture of the object was not undertaken in a distant land, but that it was executed relatively locally – whether that be in the German-speaking world or Christendom as a whole is unclear – at an earlier date. This entry raises several crucial questions. Had the Indo-Portuguese aspersorium's exotic and hybrid features become naturalized over the course of its life in the Imperial *Kunstkammer*? Were the signs of cultural heterogeneity no longer visually potent? Were they ever? Are we, as art historians, recognizing cultural mixing where early modern viewers did not?

Although there appears little to suggest that the particular cultural heterogeneity of the aspersorium was remarkable to the compilers of the Habsburg inventories, this does not necessarily mean that the object, and other objects like it, did not signal the mixing of cultures to early modern viewers. In each entry a number of the aspersorium's visible characteristics were omitted. Writing inventory entries called for interpretative decisions at every point in the process. Compilers had to determine – most likely very quickly – where the essential content of each object began and ended. As a result each entry is several degrees removed from how the object was actually experienced and perceived.

We must also keep in mind that early modern princely collections were inherently heterogeneous; the trade, travel, and gift economy that fostered princely collections ensured that the mixing and interaction of objects from diverse cultures was the norm.⁷⁹ We also must consider that many collectors in early modern Europe found items such as the aspersorium collectible precisely because they brought together elements of different cultures into one object. Finally, we must not forget the purpose of inventories. They were created quickly and efficiently to account for and, at times, to locate an object in a vast space that might be filled with thousands

of unique art objects and artefacts. Hence, just because the cultural mixing the aspersorium evidences did not prompt a comment by compilers of inventories does not mean that it was not significant to its audience, or its collector. Nor does it mean that we cannot comment upon it. But in order to do so, it is necessary to understand the ways in which the archival traces of collections and the terms employed therein – such as 'Indian' – encourage us to view the contents of collections in limited and circumscribed ways.

Inventories, as this case-study has attempted to show, can be deceptive. The textual traces of collections have continued to exert considerable authority over how we understand collections and collecting practices, and their structure as a seemingly straightforward list and their sparse and ambiguous language encourages us to paper over not only the presence of hybrid objects of diverse origins but also the ways in which these objects signalled the mixing of cultures. As a result, the various nuances of the role of hybrid and colonial manufactured objects have not been addressed in full by scholarship.

In calling attention to the ways in which inventories obscure the complexities of cultural mixing in early modern collections, we do not suggest that inventories tell us nothing about the role of exotica in early modern collections; rather, we are raising a methodological and interpretative dilemma. Admittedly, taking seriously the role of hybrid or colonial manufactured objects in princely collections takes us down a path that we have been unable to explore here at length. For in order to understand how objects like the aspersorium were recognized we need better methods of investigation, more searching for archival documents and more attentive analysis of extant objects. Because, as Christina Normore points out elsewhere in this volume, 'despite scholarly hopes to the contrary, paper inventories are not identical with the material inventory they record.'

This essay has presented two case-studies that analyze the language of several inventory entries describing particular 'Indian' objects over time and in different locations. In focusing on the differences between the entries that recorded Mixtec masks and an Indo-Portuguese aspersorium, we have shed light on how remarkable characteristics of exotica changed over time. We have also shown that the shifts and nuances in the ways these objects were described and where they were housed provides

some insight into their use. More importantly, however, we have demonstrated that these entries present examples of the way in which compilers of inventories dealt with objects of remote and sometimes obscure manufacture: they dealt with them by distilling a good deal of visual and cultural information into a single term – 'Indian'. Taken for granted in previous scholarship, 'Indian' is both a complex descriptive that could denote abundance, wealth, and the exotic, while at the same time remaining a term that might suggest an object's presumed provenance (not from Europe), use (in rituals) and style (non-European). Ultimately, we have demonstrated that in early modern inventories the term 'Indian' is an opaque signifier that reflects the difficulties in defining new and unusual things in an ever-expanding early modern world.

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- 13 See most recently, B. E. Hamann, 'The mirrors of Las Meninas: cochineal, silver and clay', *Art Bulletin* 92 nos. 1–2 (2010), pp. 6–35, where the author's broad claims about Europe's relation to the New World through an analysis of objects in *Las Meninas* was the topic of debate amongst scholars. S. L. Stratton-Pruitt rightly compares Hamann's study to scholarship on Medici and Habsburg exotica in 'Response: why drag in Velázquez?', *Art Bulletin* 92 nos. 1–2 (2010), pp. 52–3.
- 14 W. Reinhard, 'Introduction', in *Il Nuovo Mondo nella coscienza italiana e tedesca del Cinquecento*, ed. A. Properi and W. Reinhard (Bologna, 1992), pp. 7–18.
- 15 C. Feest, 'Early Native American collections in Europe and North America', in *Uncommon Legacies. Native American Art from the Peabody Essex Museum*, ed. J. R. Grimes, exh. cat., Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA (Seattle, 2002), pp. 28–45, and Almudena Pérez de Tudela and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, 'Luxury goods for royal collectors: exotica, princely gifts and rare animals exchanged between the Iberian courts and Central Europe', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 3 (2001), pp. 1–149.
- 16 'Indies', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*: <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00299371>
- 17 R. Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East. A study in the history of monsters', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), pp. 159–97, at p. 160.
- 18 Ibid., p. 161.
- 19 P. Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters. A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 6–7.
- 20 See Wittkower, op. cit. (note 17), p. 181.
- 21 See Mitter, op. cit. (note 19), p. 10.
- 22 N. Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire. Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), pp. 167–8.
- 23 M. Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian*, trans. W. Marsden (New York, 2008), pp. 256, 261–3.
- 24 D. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1965), pp. 38–9.
- 25 C. Colombo, *Il giornale di bordo, libro della prima navigazione e scoperta delle Indie, tomo I*, ed. P. Taviani and C. Varela (Rome, 1988), p. 8.
- 26 Ibid., p. 40: 'lengua de indios Guanahaní. Leugo vieron gente desnuda. . .'
- 27 Trotti wrote in Latin: 'insule de India'; G. Symcox (ed.), *Italian Reports on Amercia, 1493–1522. Letters, Dispatches and Papal Bulls* (Turnhout, 2001), p. 91.
- 28 'Las Antillas del Rey de Castella' and 'Toda esta terra he descoberta por mandado del Rey de Castella.'
- 29 M. Milanese, 'Arsarot o Anian? Identità e separazione tra Asia e Nuovo Mondo nella cartografia del Cinquecento (1500–1570)', in A. Properi and W. Reinhard (eds.), *Nuovo Mondo nella coscienza italiana e tedesca del Cinquecento* (Bologna, 1991), pp. 19–78, at pp. 28–9.
- 30 E. F. Tuttle, 'Borrowing versus semantic shift: New World nomenclature in European languages', in F. Chiappelli (ed.), *First Images of America. The Impact of the New World on the Old*, vol. II (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 595–611, at p. 598. Lach has similarly argued, that during the early modern period, 'Indian' was a token of an object's antipodal character, that is, of the fact that it came from outside of Europe. In these instances the adjective 'Indian' functioned as a general indicator of difference *per se*. See Lach, op. cit. (note 24), chapters III and IV.
- 31 Tuttle, op. cit. (note 30), p. 598.
- 32 For images of all the prints in this series, see A. B. Vannucci, *Jan Van Der Straet detto Giovanni Stradano: flandrus pictor et inventor* (Milan, 1997), no. 693, pp. 371–88. Note in particular feather skirts in the following prints in the series: Indians hunting lions (no. 8), Indians smoking out serpents (no. 44), Indians fishing for pelicans (no. 91), Indians pearl fishing (no. 93), and Indians hunting for geese (no. 95). Also see, P. Mason, *Infelicities, Representations of the Exotic* (Baltimore, 1998), pp. 21–23.
- 33 See the most recent discussion of this in S. Leitch, 'Burgkmair's peoples of Africa and India (1508) and the origins of ethnography in print', *Art Bulletin* 91 (2009), pp. 134–59, at p. 134. One of Sturtevant's first explorations of this topic is in: 'La Tupinambisation des Indiens d'Amérique du Nord', in G. Thérien (ed.), *Les figures de l'Indien* (Montreal, 1988), pp. 295–306.
- 34 D. Bleichmar, 'Books, bodies, and fields: sixteenth-century transatlantic encounters with New World materia medica', in L. Schiebinger and C. Swan (eds.), *Colonial Botany. Science, Commerce and Politics in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia, 2005), pp. 83–99, at pp. 98–9.
- 35 The bibliography on these masks is too vast to list completely here. The most important sources on the two masks in the Museo Pignorini in relation to the Medici inventories include: Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 12; Heikamp, op. cit. [1976] (note 5), p. 457; Laura Laurencich Minelli, 'Esotica', in P. Barocchi (ed.), *Palazzo Vecchio: committenza e collezionismo medicei* (Florence, 1980), pp. 161–72, at pp. 170–1; E. Bassani, 'Il collezionismo esotico dei Medici nel Cinquecento', in C. Adelson (ed.), *Le Arti del Principato Mediceo* (Florence, 1980), pp. 55–71, at p. 68; G. Cipriani, 'Il mondo americano nella Toscana del Cinquecento. Collezionismo e letteratura', *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa* 98 no. 263 (1992), pp. 225–35, at pp. 229–30; M. Scalini, 'Exotica in der mediceischen Kunstammer. Bemerkungen zur Herkunftsfrage und zu ihrer einstigen Präsentation', in W. Seipel (ed.), *Exotica. Jahrbuch*

- des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* 3 (2001), pp. 129-43, p. 130; F. Fiorani, *The Marvels of Maps. Art, Cartography and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, 2005), p. 75; Turpin, op. cit. (note 8), p. 71.
- 36 ASF, GM 28, fol. 42r: 'Una maschera venuta dell'India composta di turchine sopra il legno'; Cosimo Conti, *La prima reggia di Cosimo I de' Medici nel Palazzo già della Signoria di Firenze* (Florence, 1893), p. 174; Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 34.
- 37 ASF, GM 7, fol. 26v: 'vestaglia di penna dindia . . . N° 2'; Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 24; S. Ciruzzi, 'Gli antichi oggetti americani nelle collezioni del Museo Nazionale di Antropologia e Etnologia', *Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia* 113 (1983), pp. 151-65, at p. 155. Ciruzzi has connected this citation to two Tupinamba robes in the National Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Florence.
- 38 ASF, GM 28, 47: '7 teste di varii animali cioe 3 indiane una d'amatista et 2 d'agate, le 4 una di prasma una di Corniuela, et dua d'agata/ 1 granchietto di corniuela di rilievo inscatoletta fonda le quali si sono richavute q°3 di soprasto da Benvenuto'; Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 35.
- 39 C. Conforti, 'La grotta degli animali o del diluvio nel giardino di Villa Medici a Castello' *Quaderni di Palazzo Te* 4 no. 6 (1987), pp. 71-80, at p. 76; L. Berti, *Il principe dello studiolo. Francesco I dei Medici e la fine del Rinascimento fiorentino* (Pistoia, 2002), fig. 146; C. Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden* (New Haven, 1990), p. 181.
- 40 Yaya, op. cit. (note 8), p. 184; Turpin, op. cit. (note 8), p. 71.
- 41 ASF, GM 30, fol. 19r: 'Otto smeraldi indiani quattro ciottoli et quattro tavola'; ASF, GM 30, fol. 19v: 'Una maschera venuta d'India composta di turchine sopra il legno . . . Sette teste di varii animali 3 indiane, una di Amatista e 2 di agata . . . Dal Illmo e Ec mio Signor Duca addi 9 di marzo 1555 Una maschera di legno venuta dindia composta di turchine e sua vesta di cuoio n° recò Desiderio scudier al giornale a37'; ASF, GM 31, fol. 12r: 'Otto smeraldi indiani, quattro ciottoli et quattro tavola'; ASF, GM 31, fol. 12v: 'sette teste di varii animali tre indiane. Una d'amatista dua di agata . . . Una maschera venuta d'India composta di Turchine sopra il legno'; Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 34 (Heikamp cites only the first entry of the mask).
- 42 ASF, GM 65, fol. 248l: 'Dua maschere di legno coperte di turchine'; ASF, GM 65, fol. 248r: 'Dua maschere di legno coperte di turchine, poste dare in conto d'abiti et altre cose da mascherare in questo'; ASF, GM 65, fol. 327l: 'Dua mascher' di legno coperte di turchine levate diconto di robe di pui sorte imp°'; Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 34.
- 43 ASF, GM 65, fol. 328v: 'Quattro mascher pm° Indiani ricevute da parti sottoli xii – si mlzo com' al giorle.'
- 44 ASF, GM 73, fol. 19l: 'Dua maschere di legnio coperte da pietre turchine e altro alla Indiana'.
- 45 ASF, GM 87, fol. 20r: 'Maschere di legno n° dua all'indiana piene di pietre turchine'.
- 46 On the Guardaroba see M. Rosen, 'The Cosmos in the Palace. The Palazzo Vecchio Guardaroba and the Culture of Cartography in Early Modern Florence, 1563-1589', Ph.D diss., University of California, Berkeley (2004); Fiorani, op. cit. (note 35), part 1.
- 47 Translation of Vasari from G. Du C. de Vere (ed. and trans.), *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects by Giorgio Vasari*, vol. x (New York, 1976), p. 29; G. Vasari, *Le opere di Giorgio Vasari, con nuove annotazioni e commenti di Gaetano Milanesi* (Florence, 1973), pp. 635-6: 'Questo capriccio ed invenzione è nata dal duca Cosimo, per mettere insieme una volta queste cose del cielo e della terra giustissime e senza errori, e da poterle misurare e vedere, ed a parte e tutte insieme, come piacerà a chi si diletta e studia questa bellissima professione.'
- 48 ASF, GM 126, fol. 6r: 'Dua maschere di legno alla Indiana.'
- 49 The best sources on the organization of the studiolo include: V. Conticelli, 'Guardaroba di cose rare et preziose'. *Lo studiolo di Francesco I de' Medici: arte, storia e significati* (La Spezia, 2007); L. Feinberg, 'The studiolo of Francesco I reconsidered', in *The Medici, Michelangelo and the Art of the Late Renaissance Florence*, exh. cat., Art Institute of Chicago (New Haven, 2002), pp. 47-66; M. Rinehart, 'A document for the studiolo of Francesco I', in *Art the Ape of Nature. Studies in honor of H. W. Janson*, ed. M. Barash and L. Freeman (New York, 1981), pp. 275-89, M. Dezzi Bardeschi, *Lo Stanzino del principe in Palazzo Vecchio. I concetti le immagini, il desiderio* (Florence, 1980); L. Bolzoni, 'L'"invenzione" dello stanzino di Francesco I', in *Le Arti del Principato Mediceo* (Florence, 1980), pp. 255-99.
- 50 ASF, GM, 136, fols. 136r-136v.
- 51 ASF, GM 190, fol. 125v: 'Mascheria di mosaico all'Indiana rotta'. In the late nineteenth century, anthropologist Luigi Pigorini discovered a broken turquoise mask in an abandoned box in the Opificio delle Pietre Dure (now in the Museo Pigorini; see Fig. 1); perhaps the same broken mask listed in this 1595 inventory.
- 52 The condition of objects is regularly cited in German inventories.
- 53 See L. Markey, '"Istoria della terra chimata la nvova spagna". The history and reception of Sahagún's codex at the Medici court', in *Colors between Two Worlds. The Florentine Codex of Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. L. A. Waldman (Boston, forthcoming).
- 54 Laura Laurencich Minelli, in 'Oggetti americani studiati da Ulisse Aldrovandi', *Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia* 113 (1983), pp. 187-206, at p. 189, speculates that these objects do not enter Aldrovandi's collection until after 1586.
- 55 U. Aldrovandi, *Musaeum metallicum* (Bologna, 1648), pp. 550-51. We thank Irina Oryshkevich for her translation of the Latin: 'Graeci hoc opus Asaroton cognominarunt, sic appellatum, vt non nulli existimant, quoniam caenae purgamenta in ipso pavimento conuerri solerent; sed ad rem nostrum magis faciunt lithostrota, quae à nostris ferè tessellata vocantur, nempe varijs crustis, & lapidum segmentis, seu potiùs lapillis variorum colorum constructa, vt paulò ante fuit declaratum. Sed mirandum est, quod Gomara, in Historijs Indicis, recitat, nimirum ab Indis laruas, seu personas ex ligno fabrefieri, deinde la pillis variorum colorum exornari, vt perbellè lithostroton aemulentur. Quamobrem in gratiam Lectoris iconem, huius Laruae exhibemus.'
- 56 F. Lopez de Gomara, *Historia general de las Indias y vida de Hernan Cortes* (Caracas, 1979), p. 71: 'en el cual rescató las cosas siguientes: tres mascarar de madera doradas y con pedrezuelas turquesas, que parecia obra mosaica; otra mascara llanamente dorada; una cabeza de perro cubierta de piedras falsa . . .'
- 57 See P. Diemer (ed.), *Johann Baptist Fickler. Das Inventar der Münchner Herzoglichen Kunstkammer von 1598* (Munich,

- 2004), fol. 121r, no. 1707: 'Ein Indianischer herrn huet von bainen Riglen, weiß rot und Schwarz überzogen, oben auf mit 2 Teuffelsgesichten, hinten her mit einem abhängenden stulp, lasst sich ansehen als wan es eines haydnischen hohen Priesters huet sey gewesen.'
- 58 Ibid., fol. 121v, no. 1716: 'Ein Masacara mit Türckhes und roten unbekannten stainen überzogen, mit 2 lideren banden, dergleichen Indianischer Priester für in Gesicht zuhalten pflegen.'
- 59 Scholars, including D. Heikamp, H. Thoma and H. Brunner, have mistakenly surmised that this gift to Duke Albrecht V came from Duke Cosimo: Heikamp, op. cit. [1972] (note 5), p. 11; H. Thoma and H. Brunner, *Schatzkammer der Residenz München. Katalog* (Munich, 1964), p. 371. Lauran Toorians's study of the documents related to this transaction clearly demonstrates that the gift came from Francesco: L. Toorians, 'The earliest inventory of Mexican objects in Munich, 1572', *Journal of the History of Collections* 6 (1994), pp. 59–67, at p. 59.
- 60 Toorians, op. cit. (note 59), p. 65. Toorians published the Italian inventory (p. 64): 'Uno Idolo informa humana composto di varie semenze/ od. . . fere eletto fatto al Mescico. . . da quelli Popoli/ e nonsolo adorato ma glifanno anima sacrifici di Corpi/ humani' and the German inventory (p. 63): 'Dar Innen ain abgott von allerlai/ schweckheten Materi zuesamen gmacht/ von Mexico, alda Ine dasselbig volckh/ nit allain anPett, sonnder Ime auch/ Mentschen oPffern.'
- 61 Toorians, op. cit. (note 59), p. 63. The object in the first trunk is listed as: '1 Klain geschirren von Indianischer nuss darain allerlai geschnitten ist.' The objects in the tenth trunk are listed as '8 Indianische nuss in Iren schefflen, darab die Indianer siessen unnd Sauren Safft finden zum essen unnd zum trinckhen, und machen.'
- 62 ASF, GM 70, fol. 6: 'una nocie dindia legata dargiento con suo pie dargento.' And ASF, GM 79, fol. 21v: 'Un cocco o chiocciola d'India col piede e coperchio e bocchino argento dorato fatto a modo di navicella de bere . . .'
- 63 Diemer, op. cit. (note 57), fol. 39v, no. 534: 'Ein Manß Paternoster von 10 Indianischen schwarzen Bonen, mit eimen gulden rign, darein ein waßl versezt, unden daran hange ein eingefaßt, in gold Christallin Teflin, darunder Christ bildtnuß, darneben auch 2 frauenbilder, die ime ein Cränzl auf dem haupt halten, daran hengt ein Perlin in goldt eingefaßt, neben disem Paternostern ligt ein Indianische Bonenhülsen.'
- 64 *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, op. cit. (note 4), p. ccxxxvii: 'Ain drühl mit perlmuetter Indianischer arbaît, darinnen ain klains griens idolum.'
- 65 The exceptions stem from an excellent exhibition that took place at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna in 2000 and from the subsequently published papers of a symposium held during the exhibition. See W. Seipel (ed.), *Exotica: Portugals Entdeckungen in Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst und Wunderkammern der Renaissance. Ein Ausstellung des Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien* (Milan, 2000), and H. Trnek and S. Haag (eds.), *Exotica: Portugals Entdeckungen in Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst und Wunderkammern der Renaissance* (Mainz, 2001).
- 66 On contact between the ancient world and India, see Wittkower, op. cit. (note 17), pp. 160–61, and Mitter, op. cit. (note 19), pp. 6–7.
- 67 The literature on 'hybrid objects' in colonial contexts is vast. For an excellent review of the literature see C. Dean and D. Leibsohn, 'Hybridity and its discontents: considering visual culture in colonial Spanish America', *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (2003), pp. 7–8. Also see S. Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind. The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, translated from the French by D. Dusinberre (New York, 2002), pp. 117–20.
- 68 Dean and Leibsohn op. cit. (note 67), p. 11, as well as Hamann, op. cit. (note 13), pp. 10–14.
- 69 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer, inv. no. 913. E. Fučíková (ed.) *Rudolf II and Prague. The Court and the City* (London: 1997), cat. II.120; Seipel, op. cit. (note 65), cat. 85.
- 70 On the defining features of Indo-Portuguese material culture, see J. Irwin, 'Reflections on Indo-Portuguese art', *Burlington Magazine* 97 (1955), pp. 386–90. For more recent work, see P. Carvalho, *Luxury for Export. Artistic Exchange between India and Portugal around 1600* (Pittsburgh, 2008), p. 3.
- 71 Psalm 41:2.
- 72 H. Haupt, 'Die Kunstkammer Kaiser Rudolfs II. in Prag. Ein Inventar aus den Jahren 1607–1611', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 72 (1976), pp. xvi–xix. On the political and representational significance of Rudolph II's *Kunstkammer*, see T. DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastry of Nature. Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1993).
- 73 Ibid., fol. 59 and fol. 10: 'von seiden mit der nade geneite gemehl und tafelein und von allerley seltzamer vierfüßiger their, visch, und vögel gebain.'
- 74 Ibid., fol. 33, no. 283. In Europe in the sixteenth century it was believed that coconuts were harvested from the surface of the ocean. H. Trnek, "'Und ich hab aber all mein lebttag nichts gesehen, das mein hercz also erfreuet hat als diese ding.'" *Exotica in habsburgischen Kunstkammern*, deren Inventare und Bestände', in Seipel, op. cit. (note 65), p. 32.
- 75 Haupt, op. cit. (note 72), fol. 33r, no. 287. '1 indianische nuß in formb eines kesselins, in siber vergult und der kern darin gefasst.' On Daniel Froschl see, H. Trnek, 'Daniel Froschl–Kaiserliche Miniaturmaler und Antiquarius', in Trnek and Haag, op. cit. (note 65), pp. 220–31.
- 76 A. van der Woude and A. Schuurman (eds.), *Probate Inventories: a New Source for Historical Study of Wealth, Material Culture and Agricultural Development. Papers presented at the Leeuwenborch Conference, Wageningen* (Wageningen, 1980); L. Seeling, 'Historische Inventare: Geschichte, Formen, Funktion', in *Sammlungsdokumentation* (Munich, 2001), pp. 20–35.
- 77 'Nachlaßinventar des Kaisers Matthias von 1619, nach dem 5. Mai 1619', in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 20 (1900), p. cxxi no. 3373: 'Ain weickessele, in silber eingefasst, von mistura'.
- 78 'Inventar der kaiserlichen Weltlichen Schatzkammer in Wien, 1750', in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 10 (1890), p. cclv, no. 54. 'Ein grosze cocunusz, so einen weihwasserkassel formiert, stark auf alt arth mit fligenden und laufenden thiren verschnitten, worinnen ein bezoar und oben einen handhab, die ganze fassung silber und vergold, auf den obern reif eine inscription.'
- 79 L. Daston, 'The factual sensibilities', *Isis* 79 (1988), pp. 452–70; P. Findlen, 'Inventing Nature: commerce, art and science in the early modern cabinet of curiosities', in P. Findlen and P. H. Smith (eds.), *Merchants and Marvels. Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2002), pp. 297–323; M. A. Meadow, 'Merchants and marvels: Hans Jacob Fugger and the origins of the *Wunderkammer*', in *ibid.*, pp. 182–200.