Research Article

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MATERIALIZING IMMACULACY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY TYROL: MARIAN DEVOTION AND THE MATERIAL POETICS OF SILVER*

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ABSTRACT

The Innsbruck sepulchral chapel of Habsburg prince and sovereign of Tyrol, Archduke Ferdinand II (1529–1595), accommodates a generously sized Marian altarpiece, the focus of this study. Chased reliefs crafted from solid silver are mounted on ebony-veneered panels with ivory accentuating the moldings that frame the pictorial fields. This restrained material palette conjures a vision of the Virgin Immaculate and results in a display of silver on a monumental scale. In contrast to the Archduke's extensive Kunst- and Wunderkammer at nearby Ambras Castle, the altarpiece has received relatively little scholarly attention. Drawing from diverse fields such as theology, botany, and music, this paper delves into the altarpiece's material and pictorial complexity and discusses the multifaceted layers of meaning that underpin the creation of this remarkable work. Considered within the context of the sepulchral chapel, hierarchies of matter, color, and space convey the Virgin's singular status and her role as primary intercessor. Jesuit thought and new patterns of Marian devotion, not least under the influence of Peter Canisius, play a pivotal role in this context, which is framed against the backdrop of Habsburg piety and Counter-Reformation efforts.

The altarpiece meaningfully embodies the theme of the Virgin Mary as mirror of virtue, in the tradition of *speculum sine macula* (a mirror without stain). At the same time, the silver's tendency to tarnish and blacken draws parallels to the ambiguous tensions and complexities surrounding her immaculacy and theological beauty.

This study also highlights the slippage between artistic practice and the broader context of Tyrolean silver mining and minting activity. At a time when the value of coined silver was becoming uncertain and its purity questioned, the altarpiece's tarnished materiality demonstrates the degree to which moral and material virtue were subject to negotiation and open to ambiguous interpretation. Therefore, this paper also illuminates and investigates period concepts of material immaculacy, purity, and preciousness, which stand at the intersection of theological ideals, financial motivations, and artistic ambition.

KEYWORDS

Silver; Materiality; Numismatics; Marian Devotion; Habsburg; Jesuit; Peter Canisius; Blackness; 16th century; Architecture; Altarpiece; Early Modern Europe; Innsbruck; Tyrol; Ferdinand II; Castle Ambras; Counter-Reformation

The words of the Lord are pure words,
like silver refined in a furnace on the ground,
purified seven times.
Psalm 12:6

Squeezed between the upper levels of the Innsbruck Hofburg and the Franciscan Hofkirche, the sepulchral chapel of the Archduke of Austria, Ferdinand II (1529–1595), is a most unexpected structure, seemingly suspended in mid-air by divine volition (Fig. 1).[1] Stepping into this so-called *Silberne Kapelle* (Silver Chapel) via a flight of stairs from the Hofkirche, one is greeted by a surprisingly lofty space that accommodates a significantly sized silver altarpiece (Fig. 3). In its current state, the altarpiece is over five meters in height and the silver figure of the Virgin is life-sized. Originally, the altarpiece would have been even more expansive. Hinges and linking slots still visible today suggest the existence of wings and a pedimented structure on top that have been lost since at least the late eighteenth century.[2]

The Habsburg prince and second-born son of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I (1503–1564) was a highly involved patron, seeking to have his exceptional taste realized by some of the finest artists of his time, striving for both ingenuity and quality. Ferdinand II's significant Kunst- and Wunderkammer collection at nearby Ambras Castle also speaks to the Archduke's keen awareness of materials and materiality. There, the various pieces of naturalia and artificialia he collected were organized based on materials in a series of cupboards.[3] Time and again, surviving archival sources document Ferdinand's personal involvement in and close direction of many of his artistic commissions and patronage projects. At present, however, the chapel at large and the altarpiece in particular play only a minor role in the scholarship on the Archduke's prolific artistic patronage, to which his Ambras collections bear such rich and exceptional evidence. By all indications, similarly thoughtful patterns of patronage were at play when furnishing the Innsbruck chapel and creating the altarpiece. Surviving documents on this commission detail, for instance, the careful sourcing of exceptionally high-quality materials via Italian agents.[4] These indicate that designs for the altarpiece had already been specified by 1577, when the finest ebony was sought by the Archduke's agents in Venice and work on the silver reliefs was likely already underway.[5] The Innsbruck altarpiece itself was a collaboration between Ferdinand's court goldsmith Anton Ort (ca. 1530–1600) and his court joiner Conrad Gottfried (active 1569–1580), although the famed Flemish sculptor Alexander Colin (ca. 1527–1612) might have influenced some of the more Italianate stylistic design choices.[6] Beyond the altarpiece, Ferdinand was

Fig. 1: Looking south down the Silver Chapel (Photo: author).

actively involved in designing his tomb, executed by Colin, even leaving precise instructions for the completion of his effigy figure in his will.[7]

The Silver Chapel and its altar provide an opportunity to consider Ferdinand's patronage of devotional art more closely, as well as illuminating the last two decades of his rule and life. The space accommodates a complex and carefully considered scheme in which the altar becomes the devotional climax. In its initial position at the end of the two northern chapel bays, it served as the culmination of the pictorial program of the intensely red ceiling paintings. There, it was consecrated in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in 1578. In its current location at the southern end of the chapel, it occupies a similarly vital position, providing the Archduke's armored effigy with a focal point for his eternal prayer. These two largely monochromatic southern bays were created as an extension between 1586–1587 (Fig. 2).[8] This revision provided additional space when Ferdinand remarried following the death of his first morganatic wife, Philippine Welser (1527–1580) and her burial in the northern chapel bays.

Fig. 2: View of the Silver Chapel with Ferdinand's tomb monument and effigy (Photo: agefotostock / Alamy Stock Foto).

Early studies are especially condemning of the altarpiece's distinctive materiality. David von Schönherr describes Ferdinand's sculptured tomb as "refined" and "elegant" (Fig. 2), while the altarpiece is judged to be of "great material, but little artistic value."[9] What, indeed, are the reasons for such a "decadent" display of silver that by comparison might outshine even a fine artistic achievement? What is the metal's significance in both the altarpiece's composition and the devotional culture surrounding it? Recognizing this highly unusual display of precious metal on such a monumental scale as an intentional material hyperbole can, I argue, serve as a productive way to approach questions of early modern period values, be they moral, material, or monetary. While elaborating on the altarpiece's sepulchral significance, I also seek to elucidate its material dimensions. With its remarkable display of silver, the altarpiece was ideally placed to solidify the often ambiguous value of silver and even to shift perceptions of the metal's moral purity.

In a recent contribution, Christian G. Schulz compares six monumental silver altarpieces of the seventeenth century against the backdrop of confessional change and princely rivalry at Northern European courts.[10] His engagement with the works' distinct ebony and silver materiality and these materials' potential symbolic meaning proves an important step for recognizing this taste as something more than a generic fashion.[11] However, the sharp distinction that is drawn between this group of works and earlier precedent appears too rigid at times. Schulz references both the Innsbruck altarpiece and its senior, the silver retable at the Sigismund chapel in the Wawel Cathedral in Kraków (1531–1538) as preparatory precedents. However, he denies both of these works' true "Sinnbildhaftigkeit" (explicit pictorial significance) in terms of their materiality.[12] Moreover, for Schulz the allegorizing of materiality is a largely Protestant phenomenon and the sensibility of material poetical potential is negligible in works of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The following discussion refutes this notion in particular and shows rather that beside following a long-standing tradition, the engagement with materiality and material poetics is a significant pillar of biblical exegesis beyond confessional divides. The first part of this paper situates the altarpiece with its iconographic and material choices both within the local courtly context as well as wider debates surrounding the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Consequently, I consider the specific spatial context of the chapel as a whole, articulating how space, color, and materials were used to create an increased sense of proximity to the divine and a heightening of the Virgin's intercessory potency. This section also probes the seeming parallelism between the Virgin's (unequal) divine union and the morganatic first marriage of the chapel's patron. Finally, the paper returns more specifically to the altarpiece's silver

materiality. Given the specific local significance of silver mining and minting within the Tyrolean Alps, financial ambition is set next to theological ideals and aesthetical motivation, illuminating the ambiguous meaning of tarnishing silver.

SILVER REFLECTIONS OF THE VIRGIN IMMACULATE

During the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Ferdinand's religious patronage was guided by popular patterns of Marian devotion, not least under Jesuit influence. One of the order's leading figures, Peter Canisius (1521–1597), served as Ferdinand's personal confessor and court preacher in Innsbruck from 1571 to 1577.[13] Notably, these were the years immediately preceding the conception of the altarpiece and chapel space. Canisius promoted the veneration of the Virgin Mary as key to the clarification of the Catholic faith and published several works in defense of the Marian cult that were widely read.[14]

Responsible for courtly sermons, pastoral care, and theological teaching, the connection between Canisius and the Archduke seems to have stimulated religious patronage in the duchy and new theological ideas. Robert Evans even goes so far as to credit Canisius with planting the initial seed that would lead to the re-establishment of the Catholic faith in the Habsburg lands.[15] As an enormously talented preacher, Canisius's sermons found favor among both the nobility and the broader public, persuading large numbers to (re-)convert to Catholicism.[16] It was not least this affinity for rhetoric that made him an influential political figure, as he maintained close relations with both the Curia and various European courts.[17]

In the above ways, Canisius was very well matched with his patron, who was also a strong supporter of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.[18] As we are reminded by the reliefs of his sepulchral monument, Ferdinand's efforts had initially been closely linked to his military career. Later they turned into persistent diplomatic efforts, albeit without losing their zeal. Like elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire, the Jesuits' focus on the devotion of the Virgin Mary shaped Catholic practice, both within the Innsbruck court and among the wider Tyrolean public. The creation and significance of the silver altarpiece need to be set against such intricate layers of Marian devotional ritual. With its dedication to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, the Innsbruck altarpiece is a clear distillation of the type of fervent Catholic piety and sanctoral intercession that served as a defiant answer to Protestant criticism.[19] This would have been reinforced by the generous indulgences that were issued by the Pope on occasion of the chapel's consecration.[20]

The doctrine of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception elaborates on whether Mary

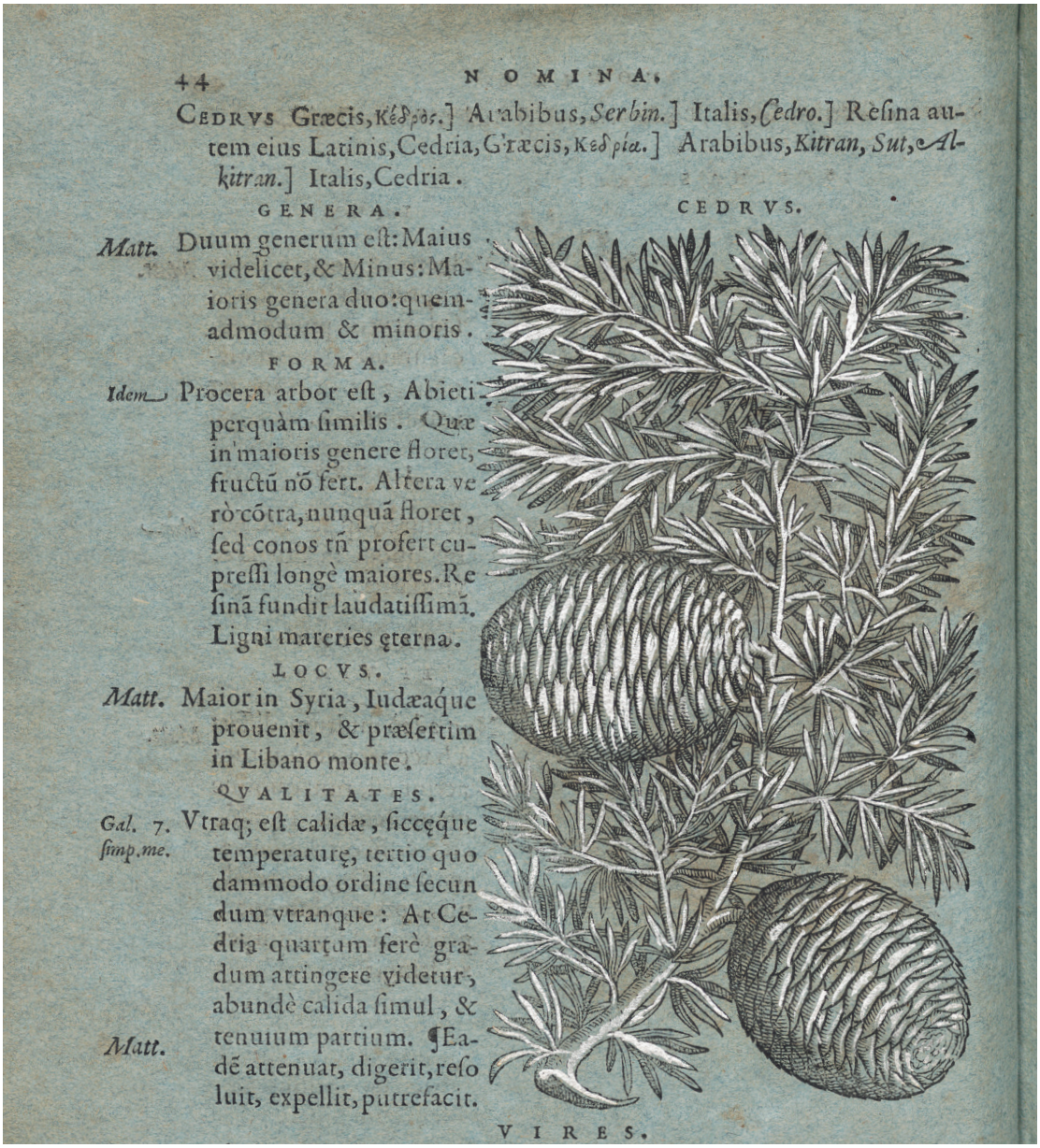
Fig. 3: Anton Ort and Conrad Gottfried, *Silver Altarpiece,* 1577–1578, ebony veneer, ivory, silver, gilding, jewels, h.: 524 cm. Silver Chapel, Court Church, Innsbruck (Photo: Laszlo Szirtesi / Alamy Stock Foto).

herself was conceived without original sin and whether both her soul and her body were untainted. Clarifying her precise role in salvation, these questions touch upon key areas of Christian faith as well as God's mystical presence and work on earth. Mary's Immaculate Conception is, at its core, an ontological question and one pertaining to the coming together of body and soul. As such, it also relates to matters of immanence, materiality, and the (creative) generative act.[21] Mary's immaculacy remained a matter of extensive debate and theological controversy for more than half a millennium.[22] For the temporal scope of the present discussion, the issue of immaculate matter continued to be marked by ambiguity and mystery. The dogma was only formally codified by the papacy in 1854, even if an Office and Mass for the celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Mariale, was already approved by Pope Sixtus IV in 1480.[23] As Rosilie Hernández notes, both the doctrine's scholarly and theological discourse and the popular fervor surrounding the cult drove its codification and continued success.[24] The rise of Mary's popularity as primary intercessor created a need for pictorial representations of her Immaculate Conception.

The Innsbruck retable consists of several registers that are all in the same material palette of silver, gold, ivory, and ebony (Fig. 3). The predella has reliefs of four prophets alongside three floral grates that were possibly used to store relics.[25] The incomplete cornice is embellished with silver reliefs that mix scrollwork, fruit, and putti into a richly ornamented grotesque tableau. However, it is the central field with its complex boxed layout that draws the eye of the beholder. It conjures a vision of the Virgin Mary surrounded by symbols of her immaculacy, the iconographic program fitting the chapel's dedication. The ring of outer reliefs depicts typological similes taken from the Old Testament, in particular the Song of Songs and the Book of Revelation.[26] This scene is overlooked by God the Father, who is shown among clouds in a triangular field that mirrors the shape of his halo.

In the Innsbruck altarpiece, the arrangement of the individual pictures of Mary's immaculacy is guided by a visual symmetry that carries hermeneutic significance (Fig. 3). Embedded into a grid-like system, the individual reliefs are paired across the centrally positioned Mary. Placed in ornate shallow bowls, each of the botanical specimens has a mirroring partner. Their carefully naturalistic rendering is notable and raises the question of a possible connection to the work of Pietro Andrea Mattioli, the Archduke's physician, and notable scholar of medical herbology. Indeed, a luxury presentation copy of Mattioli's *Compendium De Plantis omnibus* (1571), with an exclusive dedicatory preface to Ferdinand, is listed in the Ambras inventory.[27] This copy, now at the Austrian National Library, is striking not least because of its blue paper and silver heightening of the

numerous woodcuts materializing plants and herbs (Fig. 4). Together with Mary's other attributes, these specimens spin a web of mirrored shapes and words in the altarpiece, rhythmically laying out similes. God's temple is formed so as to be visually reminiscent of the tower of David. The relief of the well is paired with the fountain, and the open gate on the bottom left which beckons its beholder up the stairs, finds its counterpart in the closed doors on the bottom right. Visually, this allows for a balanced and aesthetically


44 NOMINA.

CEDRVS Græcis, Κέδρος.] Arabibus, *Serbin.*] Italis, *Cedro.*] Resina autem eius Latinis, Cedria, Græcis, Κεδρία.] Arabibus, *Kitran, Sut, Alkitran.*] Italis, Cedria.

GENERA.

Matt. Duum generum est: Maius videlicet, & Minus: Maioris genera duo: quemadmodum & minoris.

FORMA.

Idem. Procera arbor est, Abieti perquàm similis. Quæ in maioris genere floret, fructū nō fert. Altera verò cótra, nunquā floret, sed conos tñ profert cupressi longè maiores. Resinā fundit laudatissimā. Ligni mareries ęterna.

LOCVS.

Matt. Maior in Syria, Iudæaque prouenit, & præsertim in Libano monte.

QVALITATES.

Gal. 7. simp. me. Vtraq; est calidæ, siccęque temperaturę, tertio quodammodo ordine secundum vtranque: At Cedria quartum ferè gradum attingere videtur, abundè calida simul, & tenuium partium. ¶Eadē attenuat, digerit, resoluit, expellit, putrefacit.

Matt.

CEDRVS.

VIRES.

Fig. 4: Pietro Andrea Mattioli, "CEDRVS" in *Compendium De Plantis omnibus […],* (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1571). Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Photo: Austrian National Library).

Fig. 5: *Virgin Tota Pulchra,* woodcut illustration to Peter Canisius *De Maria Virgine […]* (Ingolstadt: David Sartorius, 1583). Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Photo: Austrian National Library).

pleasing composition, tempting the beholder to go on a meditative journey of the Virgin's virtue. The composition's visual parallelism intersects with scriptural exegesis to reveal divine truth both textually and pictorially.

The altarpiece's layout is closely related to the pictorial tradition known as the Virgin *tota pulchra.* Developed in circles of Parisian clergy just before 1500, this image served as the most successful visualization of the complex doctrine of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception. A popular depiction in books of hours *à l'usage de Rome,* the image quickly spread internationally. It aimed to expound Mary's untainted beauty as a spiritual and an ontological state in a concise and memorable pictorial form.[28] The image of the Virgin *tota pulchra* also features in Canisius's Marian treatise, *De Maria Virgine incomparabili.* First published in 1577, it summarizes Marian doctrine while also serving as a meditative text. It was reissued in a new edition in 1583 with a dedication to Archduke Ferdinand (Fig. 5). Commonly

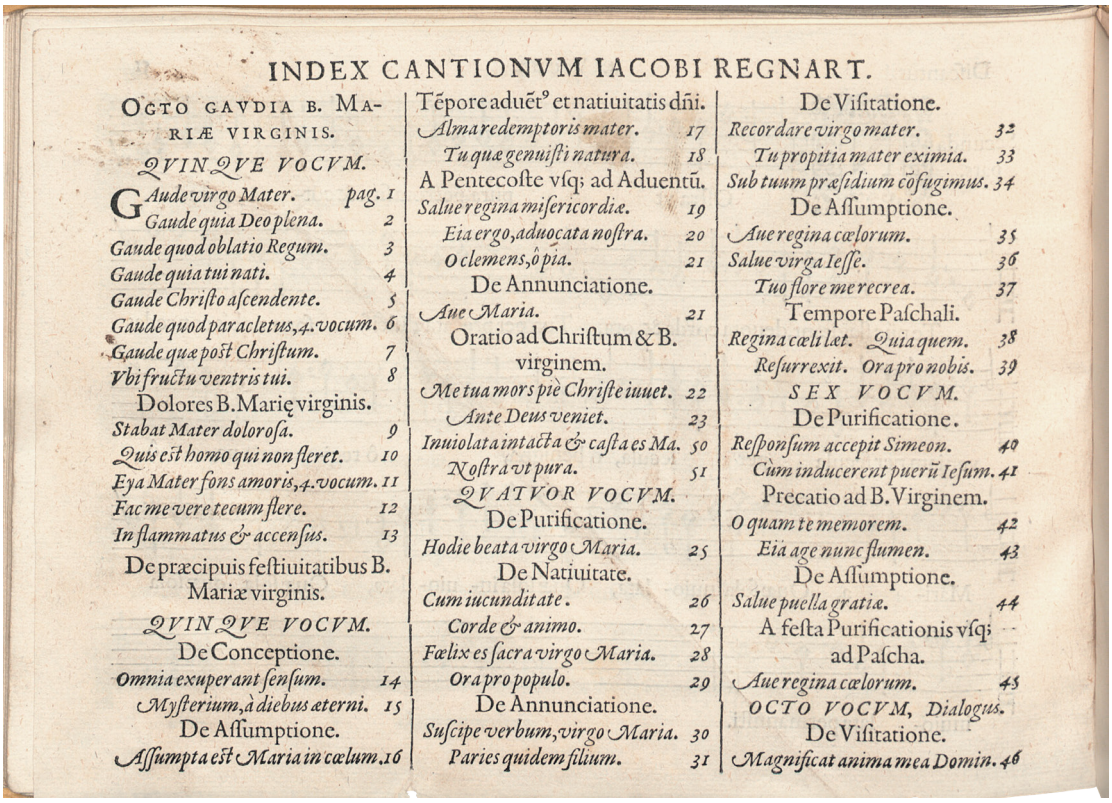
known as *Mariale,* it is divided into five parts, each of which elaborates on and substantiates the Virgin's spiritual beauty, her *excellentia, nobilitas, virtus,* and *dignitas.* Canisius links his theological writings with woodcuts prefacing each section which are then, in turn, expounded by poems.[29] This bears testament to his appreciation of both the pictorial and poetic traditions as meditative tools.

Literally standing for the word of God, the verse from Song of Songs 4:7, *tota pulchra es amica mea et macula non est in te* [You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you], is used to set the tone for an exploration of Mary's beauty through an assortment of similes in both pictorial and textual form. Gilded letters on the altarpiece spell out this verse and the similes. This simultaneously hints at the importance of linking pictorial and textual form, while perhaps also preserving an alchemical–astrological metallic hierarchy, with God's word being literally gilded as the noblest product.

By the sixteenth century, the image of the Virgin *tota pulchra,* moreover, stood in close connection to the Marian litanies, a form of petitionary prayer that codified some of the most popular typological similes describing the Virgin's spiritual beauty.[30] Both image and prayer highlight the Virgin's exalted state as principal saint and intercessor. A popular ritual of Counter-Reformation devotion, Marian litanies were controversial to those of Reformed faiths, especially for their formulaic and repetitive invocations of the Virgin Mary.[31] While Catholic reformers such as Canisius saw in it a potent tool, critics on the other side of the confessional divide believed this to be a sign of revolting idolatry.[32] With their formulaic Latin invocations, Marian litanies depended on rhythm as well as the ebb and flow of repetition to reach their full potential as highly effective devotional rituals for a lay audience. Litanies could be prayed silently, spoken, or chanted. They were also expressed in elaborate polyphonic compositions for trained choirs, which made them interesting as occasions for noble self-fashioning.[33]

The Silver Chapel was notably designed as an oratory.[34] In 1588, under the Archduke's patronage, the Flemish composer and Innsbruck court chapel master Jacob Regnart composed the *Mariale,* a collection of Marian motets for the whole liturgical year. Like the litanies, they emphasize Mary as Heavenly Queen and Virgin of Virgins, praising her beauty and purity (Fig. 6). Such pieces likely supplemented the recitation of the litanies by Ferdinand's comparatively large courtly choir.[35] They would have been ideally placed to celebrate Mary as we see her depicted in the Innsbruck altarpiece. Seemingly ageless, the Virgin floats on a cloud, her head covered by a delicate veil from which unbound golden locks tumble. They embellish her celestial appearance just as the luxurious gilded border of her heavily draped mantle underlines her nobility. With her hands clasped in demure prayer and her gaze cast down onto the earthly realm, she is at once majestic and humble in her heavenly beauty.

Initially there were several versions of the Marian litanies in circulation, although



INDEX CANTIONVM IACOBI REGNART.

OCTO GAVDIA B. MARIÆ VIRGINIS.

QVINQVE VOCVM.

Dolores B. Marię virginis.

De præcipuis festiuitatibus B. Mariæ virginis.

QVINQVE VOCVM.

De Conceptione.

De Assumptione.

Tępore aduēt⁹ et natiuitatis dñi.

A Pentecoste vsq; ad Aduentū.

De Annunciatione.

Oratio ad Christum & B. virginem.

QVATVOR VOCVM.

De Purificatione.

De Natiuitate.

De Annunciatione.

De Visitatione.

De Assumptione.

Tempore Paschali.

SEX VOCVM.

De Purificatione.

Precatio ad B. Virginem.

De Assumptione.

A festa Purificationis vsq; ad Pascha.

OCTO VOCVM, Dialogus.

De Visitatione.

Fig. 6: Jacob Regnart, *Contents of Mariale, hoc est:* [...], 1588, Innsbruck [Oenipons], printed on paper. Bavarian State Library, Munich, Inv. No. 4 Mus.pr. 178 (Photo: Bavarian State Library).

the Litany of Loreto became the most popular in Catholic Europe. Having personally visited the Loreto shrine in 1548, Canisius promoted its version of the litanies and is likely behind their first publication in the German lands in 1558.[36] Notably, Ferdinand later built an architectural copy of the original shrine of the Virgin of Loreto in 1589 in the wooded meadows surrounding Hall, his minting capital (Fig. 7). This was the first such copy in the Holy Roman Empire, although several more would be added in the next century. In the company of the Innsbruck court, Ferdinand and his devout second wife, his niece Anna Caterina Gonzaga (1566–1621), regularly went on one-day pilgrimages to this nearby church.[37] The shrine replica related to Innsbruck through fifteen posts placed along the way. They showed the mysteries of the rosary and remain standing today.

Both geographically and materially, key areas of Tyrolean mining and minting activity specifically were woven into a fabric of Marian piety, not least the minting hub of Hall with its replica of the Loreto shrine. While fostering religious life in the spirit of Counter-Reformation piety, these initiatives also infused the social fabric of Innsbruck and its once silver-rich vicinity with new economic opportunities, while also affirming a shared Catholic

Fig. 7: Exterior of St. Maria Loretto in Thaur near Hall today, consecrated 1589 (Photo: Josef Bertsch).

identity and the continued virtue of local silver products. The goldsmith entrusted with the commission of the Innsbruck altarpiece, Anton Ort, had close familial ties to the minting milieu as well as professional relations with the newly-founded Jesuit *Damenstift* [Ladies' Convent] in Hall. Already before Ferdinand's accession as ruler of Tyrol, Ort had benefitted from the patronage of the Archduke's sisters Magdalena (1532–1590), Margarethe (1536–1576), Helena (1543–1574), and Eleonore (1534–1594) who were living in Innsbruck. It was on the princesses' recommendation that Ort was made court goldsmith in 1560 when his father-in-law, the goldsmith Hans Altensteig who had previously held the office, was promoted to *Münzwardein* (head-assayer and mint warden) at the Hall mint.[38]

While Elenore would soon become Duchess of Mantua, the other sisters convinced their brother to found the so-called *Damenstift* in Hall in 1567. Under the direction of Jesuit clergy, the *Damenstift* aimed at accommodating noblewomen, among them Ferdinand's sisters, in a monastery-like community. The remodeled premises partly made use of the former mint at Sparberegg Castle, as Ferdinand had relocated his mint to nearby Hasegg Castle that year.[39] Ort initially moved with the sisters to serve them at the *Damenstift* in Hall before he permanently stood in the employ of Archduke Ferdinand from 1573. In

both cases, Ort also oversaw the maintenance of respective (silver) collections as *Camerer,* in addition to working on new commissions as goldsmith.[40]

VISIONS IN THE CELESTIAL THEATER

Within the chapel's architectural and decorative program, the altarpiece is suspended within a specific celestial hierarchy. This informs the altarpiece's materiality as well as the chromatic break between the brightly colored northern bays and the black and white southern extension. Both color and materiality become central to accentuate spatial as well as ontological shifts. The two northern bays of the Silver Chapel have a vibrantly painted canopy. While the dado area was likely originally paneled with inlaid wood, possibly containing choir stools of Gottlieb's making, the ceiling and walls are painted with numerous angels with individualized faces on an intensely red ground sprinkled with gilded crescent moons (Figs. 1, 8).[41] It is at the southern end of this space that the altarpiece would originally have been positioned when it was first consecrated in 1578.

Like celestial windows into the mysteries of salvation, a total of 14 hexagonal

Fig. 8: Johann Baptista Fontana, *Fourteen Hexagons with Scenes from the Life of Christ,* ca. 1578, oil tempera on plaster. Silver Chapel, Court Church, Innsbruck (Photo: Bildarchiv Monheim GmbH / Alamy Stock photo).

medallions pierce the ceiling and depict scenes from the life of Christ and Mary (Fig. 8). The hexagons use the curvature of the ceiling vaults to create a plenitude of visual axes, requiring the viewer to be in constant movement to follow the narrative. Aside from the Resurrection, all scenes find a way to incorporate Mary into their composition, stressing her contribution to salvation and redemption, very much in the spirit of the Catholic reform. Save for the Road to Calvary and Resurrection scenes, the hexagons are arranged in groups of three across the two bays.[42] Such a direct breakdown, however, leaves us with a seemingly odd arrangement of the narrative cycle. This could be one of the reasons why scholarship has so far not ventured beyond a more general iconographic analysis of the hexagons.[43] Moreover, interpretations of the red backdrop and the angels are entirely absent from the literature, despite the fact that these ceiling paintings are vital for an integrated understanding of the altarpiece and the chapel space as a whole.

The choice of a bright red canopy over, for instance, a more traditional blue one symbolizes Mary's proximity to the divine while also stressing her potency as intercessor. Often in works that visualize God or the Trinity enthroned, Seraphim are depicted surrounding them as in Isaiah's vision. There, they fly around crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). Seraphim, literally meaning fiery serpent in Hebrew, are usually depicted with red wings or a red aura symbolizing their burning fervor of love within an understanding of the celestial hierarchy.[44]

Various aspects of the design are harmonized to create an upwards pull to which the beholder is subjected, mystically transporting them into an otherworldly realm. A transitional orange shade is used to represent the heavenly canopy in the hexagon with the scene of Mary's Assumption, while the worldly canopy in the other scenes is painted blue (Fig. 9). Notably, it would have been this hexagon showing the Assumption that beholders would have seen first as they ascended the staircase to this elevated space. Ferdinand's own hope for salvation is already materialized in this initial chapel space when his noble coat of arms is positioned between the Road to Calvary and the Resurrection scenes. This is an appropriate reflection of the chapel's (anticipated) sepulchral context. Yet it also speaks to the space's probing of nobility as an ontological state related to, or at least in the realm of, immaculacy. Both the nobility of the Virgin Mary in relation to her divine groom as well as the nobility of the chapel's patron and his morganatic wife are carefully negotiated side-by-side.

The vibrant wall paintings of the initial two northern bays of the Silver Chapel become a stage for visualizing Mary as Queen of Heavenly Jerusalem. A peculiarity of the Innsbruck altarpiece is the way it combines the Virgin *tota pulchra* imagery with

Fig. 9: Johann Baptista Fontana, *Hexagons with the Assumption of the Virgin Mary,* ca. 1578, oil tempera on plaster. Silver Chapel, Court Church, Innsbruck (Photo: author).

the scene of Mary's coronation in the central panel rather than showing Mary with the Christ Child as Woman of the Apocalypse (Fig. 3). This is due to the altarpiece's initial spatial context in the northern bays. Here, the altarpiece's central pane served as touchstone to the narrative scheme developed in the painted ceiling medallions. Under the guidance of God who declares the Virgin immaculate, two angels lay a heftily bejeweled crown on Mary's brow. Notably, it is the only piece formed in the round, while even the Virgin's figure is worked in high relief. Viewing the altarpiece from the side reveals the true shallowness of the relief (Fig. 10). The goldsmith's work creates a masterful illusion with the Virgin's body seeming to wondrously materialize from the ether of the ebonized panel. The combination of gleaming metal set against the velvety dark ebony would have been particularly striking in the setting of the dimly lit chapel. Then, the blackened wood panes would recede into the background, while the silver would appear to glow from within in the glistening candlelight. One can only imagine how the animating effects

Fig. 10: Anton Ort and Conrad Gottfried, *Silver Altarpiece* (detail), 1577–1578, ebony veneer, ivory, silver, gilding, jewels, h.: 524 cm. Silver Chapel, Court Church, Innsbruck (Photo: author).

of the flickering flames would have allowed the figure of the Virgin and the silver reliefs surrounding her to float appealingly.

If the original space is shaped by the intensely red ceiling, then the chapel's extension is distinguished by its near absence of color. Looking beyond the original, artfully wrought iron gate that divides the chapel's two chambers, the beholder is confronted with a window into a grisaille-like world of black and white. What is the meaning of such stark chromatic difference? These hierarchies of matter, color, and space also structure the chapel and negotiate the class disparities between its patrons, Archduke Ferdinand, Philippine Welser, and Anna Caterina Gonzaga.[45] While the Welsers were a rich Augsburg merchant family on a par with the Fuggers, the couple was sworn to secrecy over their morganatic union by the Archduke's father when Ferdinand secretly married Philippine, and their sons were excluded from Habsburg succession.[46] Philippine's tomb is located in the initial chapel space and might have

initially occupied the now empty larger niche. Divided by the iron gate, an additional niche for Ferdinand's own tomb and one for his second wife Anna Caterina were created in the southern extension; however, Anna Caterina eventually chose to be buried elsewhere.[47]

The southern extension, with its monochromatic insistence, becomes a near-literal stepping stone to the exalted material vision presented in the altarpiece. Analyzing the taste for grisaille miniatures in Burgundian manuscripts, Sophia Rochmes has convincingly shown how such restrained color palettes could signal changes in ontological states and aid mental movement through different registers of reality.[48] Rochmes also notes the distinct medial connection between grisaille and silver in particular.[49] Translating the transient luminosity of silver into visions of blacks, whites, and grays allows for the imitation of light-reflective luster closely associated with the presence of divine light. In Innsbruck, the only exception to the restricted monochromatic palette in the southern extension are jewel-like heraldic insignia, like the *pietra dura* inlays of Ferdinand's heraldic shields, which he had made in Florence in 1593 (Figs. 2, 11). The pervasive, though woefully understudied, system of heraldic color drew on various material imaginaries, such as lithic and metallic,

Fig. 11: Alexander Colin, *Tomb of Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol* (detail of the *pietra dura* coat of arms), 1588–1596. Silver Chapel, Court Church, Innsbruck (Photo: author).

but also textile, linking period perceptions of color to precious and noble matter.[50] These design choices also emphasize its (anticipated) occupants' nobility by allowing their mortal remains' greater spatial and material proximity to the Queen of the Heavens. The chromatic progression of the two chapel spaces is heightened by a material one in the altarpiece. This shift into actual ebony, ivory, silver, gold, and jewels makes the otherworldly realm of Heavenly Jerusalem tangible, marking it also as an ontological peak.

The choice of silver, moreover, specifically links to Mary's persona with the metal forming the basis for materializing her immaculacy. In a coming together of natural philosophical concepts and religious mysticism that is typical of alchemy, the altarpiece's striking use of silver elaborates on and materially glosses aspects of Mary's virginal purity. Silver held considerable astrological and alchemical meaning, its common symbol linking it to the moon whose white shine and luminous shimmer was in turn matched in the metal's qualities. This pearlescent whiteness likely provoked associations with virginal purity culminating in its association with the Roman goddess Diana. This mythical tradition was

Fig. 12: Albrecht Dürer, *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple,* from "The Life of the Virgin," ca. 1503, woodcut, 29.9 × 21.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Acc. No. 1986.1180.81 (Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art).

conflated within a Christian worldview in medieval scripture and natural philosophy. It provided narrative and symbolic precedent for the veneration of virginal purity. Dante refers to Diana as an exemplum of chastity (*Purgatory* XXV, 131), and Boccaccio equates her with the Virgin Mary (*Ninfale Fiesolana* I, 7-9), while Christine de Pizan depicts Diana as patron of the virgins in the *Epitre d'Othea*.[51] A print by Dürer demonstrates how, in the mid-sixteenth-century visual culture of the German lands, the link between Mary and Diana was similarly topical (Fig. 12). In the scene, the young Mary is presented at the temple. Atop an archway, a statuesque classical figure is depicted, while the young Mary rushes up the stairs into the temple. Both Fejda Anzelewsky and Tobias Leuker have argued that this classical figure is Diana and explored how Dürer overlays the scene with classical mythology.[52]

STAINED IMMACULACY: A PARADOX?

Silver was one of the materials used to fashion mirrors as, once polished, it could reflect its beholder and their surroundings. To many early modern eyes, mirrors could provide not just a reflection of a worldly reality but also capture God's divine creation. To gaze into a silver mirror, then, could mean beholding spiritual and moral truths through a contemplative process. Or, to put it differently, silver had the potential not just to reflect the light of this world (lumen) but also to serve as conduit to the primal light of divine inspiration and wisdom (lux).[53] Next to associations with vanity, mirrors were thus also seen as tools for divine revelations.[54] Moreover, unlike gold, silver could reflect sound as well as images. It was thus a valued medium of divine communication next to its nobler counterpart. Herbert Kessler has specified how silver was associated with divine eloquence.[55] Just as the metal had to be purified for its brilliance to truly shine, so scripture had to be illuminated through exegesis. The nature of silver's purified materiality was repeatedly qualified to be particularly suitable to make divine virtues shine forth and radiate onto its beholders, inciting in them a desire to imitate those virtues.[56] Silver's reflections could thus be seen as particularly worthy models for imitation.

The theme of the Virgin as *speculum sine macula* (a mirror without stain) is seamlessly matched and materialized with the material poetics of silver in the Innsbruck altarpiece. It seems to answer directly Canisius's call to let "the virginity and life of Mary be described as if in an image, whence as from [the surface of a] mirror the likeness, integrity, and form of virtue shine brightly."[57] In examining the woodcut illustrations accompanying Canisius's *Mariale,* Walter Melion notes how Mary's image and its making become central to Canisius's wider anti-iconoclast argument.[58] Not only is the Virgin

presented as a skilled maker of sacred images; even more significantly, she also serves as role model for beholding potent devotional images of herself.[59] One of the poems by Mezelius that Canisius includes alongside a woodcut in his *Mariale* specifically develops the idea of Mary as *imitatrix* "who offered herself as an image to be imitated." Like a "self-generated" image, the Virgin operates as a meditative mirror, and to behold her image is to gaze upon virtue itself.[60] The Innsbruck altarpiece presents the Virgin's image as a supreme mirror for contemplation and model to attain virtue. Such theological categories are seemingly set up in tension with the actual material reality of the silver reliefs that would have visibly blackened as the silver surface tarnished through oxidization. How can the spotty surface of tarnishing matter be used to materialize immaculacy?

Professing her love for her groom, the bride in Song of Songs declares herself as "black but beautiful" and "darkened by the sun" (1:4–5). Although this exact passage is not explicitly used as a scriptural basis for the Virgin *tota pulchra,* the hermeneutic tension and ambiguous interplay between material blackness and beauty is topical for the Innsbruck altarpiece, not least given its proximity to the cult of Loreto. In his influential commentary on the above passage, the early Christian scholar Origen of Alexandria understood the bride as the Church. He expounds on the significance of the bride's blackening through sun exposure. She is black "with regard to her color" due to the obscurity of her origin, and she is beautiful "due to the internal ordering of her members."[61] With its now-lost wings, possibly also made of ebony or ebonized wood, enclosing the acutely ordered silver reliefs within them, the Innsbruck altarpiece seems to answer Origen's call. The retable, with its pedimented entablature, can be seen to literally imagine Mary as House of God with the silver reliefs detailing the Virgin's internal attributes as quasi organs of her virtue. Differentiating between the visible and the spiritual sun, arguably in a parallelism to the *lux* and *lumen* distinction, the bride's dark beauty was also an expression of her proximity to God.[62] Contemporary alchemists at Ferdinand's court referenced such ideas when seeking to understand metallurgical transmutation and black skin.[63]

When we look closely at the silver reliefs of the Innsbruck altarpiece, we notice that their silver surface is, in fact, anything but spotless. Rather than with consistently gleaming silvery whiteness, we are confronted with great tonal variety of blacks, whites, and greys. By all visual indications, the tarnishing of the silver reliefs seems, at least to an extent, to have always been part of its artistic conception. In fact, Ort seems to have intentionally used his knowledge of silver's ephemeral materiality to introduce dimensional depth to the composition. In a way, the silver's tarnishing might even be argued to clarify the pictorial impression of the reliefs, rather than obscuring it. Today, some of the tarnished oxidization provides contrast and delineation of individual forms, making it more beautiful in its blackness. The relief with the

Fig. 13: Anton Ort and Conrad Gottfried, Silver Altarpiece (detail), 1577–1578, ebony veneer, ivory, silver, gilding, jewels, h.: 524 cm. Silver Chapel, Court Church, Innsbruck (Photo: author).

stairs to the Heavens (Fig. 13), for example, alternates between smooth and grooved surface finishes on the wall bricks. While the smooth squares remain relatively untouched, their grooved counterparts have noticeably tarnished deposits. Visually, this alternating pattern underlines the idea of a staircase to heaven, each row of bricks seemingly dissolving into a series of steps. Concurrently, this is also an idea found in the southern chapel extension, where a black and white marbled check floor guides the beholder "into" the vision presented in the altarpiece.

The blackness of votive images had a longstanding tradition denoting age — even antiquity — as well well as an object's heightened, potentially miraculous potency. Blackened surfaces could, however, also be perceived as unclean and the result of (moral) neglect.[64] The maintenance of liturgical vestments and church interiors came under particularly close scrutiny in the decades following the Council of Trent in 1563. In Italy, influential voices demanded votive images be protected from spoiling and decay, kept maintained, restored, or, if that was

not possible, that they should be altogether destroyed.[65] Considering the Black Madonna in the original sanctuary of Loreto, Grace Hapster has discussed the tensions and ambiguity that existed in the perception of blackened matter in liturgical decorum, especially in the wake of post-Tridentine reform.[66] Although a wooden statue, the Loreto Madonna had a notable tradition of being described as resembling silver. Its black patina in particular attracted comparisons with the metal, the color also functioning as a badge of its miraculous agency and sign of potency.[67]

The Innsbruck altarpiece's tarnishing materiality demonstrates the degree to which moral and material virtue were subject to negotiation and the object of ambiguous perception. Its creation and subsequent consecration coincided with a period in which the purity of locally coined silver was being questioned and its value was becoming uncertain in an increasingly global economy. With its firm place as currency structuring monetary systems of value, silver was especially subject to associations and anxieties surrounding its fineness and integrity. While no surviving documents are known that would detail the sourcing of the altarpiece's silver material, it seems likely that the raw metal was sourced locally. Perhaps Ort received the silver from the minting officials in Hall, like in the case of a 1582 commission when he fashioned metal fittings for a small writing desk for Anna Caterina.[68]

While serving to conjure an otherworldly vision, the luminous precious metal of silver would also have been an intimately familiar material to many local viewers who were personally entangled with the business of this metal's mining and minting.[69] As *de facto* governor of Bohemia in his father's stead, Ferdinand had previously gained practical experience of administering mines.[70] Implementing mining reforms in Bohemian Joachimsthal at Europe's most lucrative silver mines, the Archduke solidified royal sovereignty after the turmoil of the Schmalkaldic War.[71] Perhaps it was this experience that allowed the Archduke to turn the associated field of minting coin, in which the Tyrolean economy held considerable expertise, into one of his most profitable sources of revenue when yields from the Tyrolean mines continued to deplete. Profits from the minting of coin, so-called seigniorage, could be among the most lucrative prerogatives of the early modern sovereign. In 1589, diplomat Giovanni Botero used the metaphor of the "above-ground mine" to describe how, just as it had been growing within the Earth's crust, once smelted and minted, silver could propagate through cunning statesmanship and commerce.[72]

Throughout the sixteenth century, princely monetary practices were the cause of significant political and moral debate. In the face of continued value instability, currency and coinage was routinely moralized, with "good" coins being clearly distinguished from "evil" coins.[73] Examining the creation of emergency currency during the Sack of Rome (1527), Allison Stielau has recently driven home the point that lines of moral and material purity could be blurred.[74] Stielau's discussion is particularly good at demonstrating how metallic purity was not a binary value. Rather, the crucial moment of liquidation allowed

for a variety of gradations when mixing noble metals with baser materials. It is here that monetary standards, predefined regulations, and transparency of the minting process come into play.[75] Such rules and expectations, however, could also make smelting workshops and mints environments of great moral pressure, close scrutiny, and severe punishments, with a high potential for anxieties if regulatory parameters started to change, especially when in secret.

It was precisely in 1577, the year that the Innsbruck altarpiece was likely first commissioned, that Ferdinand mandated new and independent minting ordinances for his territory. Importantly, these ordinances did away altogether with previously existing value numerals and date stamps on coins minted in Hall (Fig. 14).[76] Meanwhile, regulated value rates were kept high to further increase profits. With such value markers literally disappearing from

Fig. 14: a) Mühlau mint, Guldentaler, 1567, silver, diameter: 3.86 cm, weight: 24.65 g, Inv. No. MK 205586;
b) Hall mint, Guldentaler, 1575, silver, diameter: 3.92 cm, weight: 24.25 g, Inv. No. MK 161313;
c) Hall mint, Taler, 1577–1599, silver, diameter: 4.07 cm, weight: 28.26 g, Inv. No. MK 205434. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Photos: KHM-Museumsverband).

sight, Ferdinand would have been interested in upholding trust in the the incorruptibility of his silver coin, even as he reduced the silver fineness of newly minted coins.

This new direction taken by the Archduke's mint was very much what contemporaries might have classified as "bad" coins and even as morally reprehensible. Moreover, these changes represented a significant departure from the established Tyrolean minting approach that had insisted on the production of high-quality silver coin in the tradition of the Guldiner since the fifteenth century.[77] Ferdinand seems to have been aware of his enterprise's delicate position: for instance, before the visit of his nephew Archduke Ernest, who was sent as an imperial emissary by Emperor Rudolf II to the mint in Hall in the summer of 1583, Ferdinand instructed the mint officials to clear away all old silver coins destined to be melted and re-minted and to keep them under tight lock and out of sight for the duration of the visit.[78]

Eventually, Ferdinand outsourced the supply of his mints to merchants entirely and instead charged a fee for having them use a local breakthrough innovation in minting technology, a water-powered minting machine that entirely replaced the hammering of coins by hand.[79] Without upfront investment and at virtually no risk, Ferdinand was making significant profits and established the Taler, minted in Hall, as a very popular coin, readily exported throughout Europe, where it was sold at a profit.[80] However, this popularity also resulted in

Fig. 15: a) Taler counterfeit of possibly Italian origin, after 1577, silver, diameter: 4.17 cm, weight: 27.45 g, Inv. No. MK NZ 2081;
b) Taler counterfeit of possibly Italian origin, after 1577, silver, diameter: 4.05 cm, weight: 27.16 g, Inv. No. MK 205485. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Photos: KHM-Museumsverband).

counterfeit coins produced with much lower silver content to maximize profits. Perceptions of a decrease in value and anxiety over material quality would have been further aggravated by the circulation of such counterfeit coins alongside genuine Hall mint. Although minted with visually similar coin dies to those used in Hall, the counterfeits' surface silver layer would quickly rub off and expose a copper core (Fig. 15).[81] Soon, the spotty and corroded surface would have resulted in anything but immaculate silver coin. Here as in the altarpiece, the blackening of matter required beholders to nuance what they saw against questions of material value and virtue. Moreover, the trust in rulers and governing bodies required in the case of changing currency found a notable parallel in patterns of faith fostered by new modes of religious piety and complex theological ideals.

CONCLUSION

The Innsbruck altarpiece is an early example of a large-scale silver and ebony altarpiece. This material combination is usually more firmly associated with the seventeenth century, when it became increasingly popular and prevalent in smaller-scale cabinetry and devotional works. The present case study shows how this earlier precedent successfully layers material dimensions with pictorial detail and corroborates recent scholarship seeking to question this taste as an empty shell of fashion devoid of meaning. The present paper illuminates the significance of the altarpiece within the patronage context of Archduke Ferdinand II's court. It shows how the Habsburg prince's environs proved a fertile ground for the complex and layered pictorial and material program underlying the realization of the altarpiece and his sepulchral chapel. I traced the coming together of areas as diverse as theology, botany, and music and discussed the high standards that marked Ferdinand's patronage. The present study emphasizes the influence of Jesuit thought north of the Alps and, in particular, that of Peter Canisius. Against the backdrop of anti-iconoclast arguments developed in Canisius's *Mariale,* the altarpiece's silver and ebony materiality is interpreted as a material realization of the Virgin Mary as a mirror of virtue.

The ensuing discussion also illuminated and questioned wider period categories of immaculacy, purity, and nobility standing at the intersection of moral virtue, materiality, and financial motivation. Ambiguous tension is introduced by the altar's ephemeral silver materiality, when its gleaming whiteness becomes stained by oxidization. Soot-stained and tarnished surfaces could be associated with antiquity and miraculous agency, or condemned as surfaces stained by neglect and idleness. In religious ritual, the blackened matter of devotional works could be valued for its spiritual potency and beauty. The abstract concept of the Virgin Mary's immaculacy is shown to connect vitally to ontological

questions that reflect period perceptions, not least those of nobility and social class. They are, in turn, mirrored in the chromatic and material hierarchies guiding the design of the altarpiece and the chapel accommodating it. It is in this light that the Innsbruck altarpiece reveals some striking facets of its true brilliance.

NOTES

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1 For the chapel's building history and architectural descriptions, see Johanna Felmayer, "Der Hofgoldschmied Anton Ort und sein Hauptwerk in der Silbernen Kapelle," *Veröffentlichungen des Tiroler Landesmuseums Ferdinandeum* 54 (1974): 101–140, 118–136; Erich Egg, *Die Hofkirche in Innsbruck: Das Grabdenkmal Kaiser Maximilians I. und die Silberne Kapelle* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1974), 88–99.

2 For a review of the present condition and historic restorations, see Franz Caramelle, "Zur Restaurierung der Silbernen Kapelle in der Innsbrucker Hofkirche," in *Geschichte als Gegenwart: Festschrift für Magdalena Hörmann-Weingartner,* ed. Leo Andergassen and Lukas Madersbacher, Schlern-Schriften 352 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2010): 85–95.

3 On Castle Ambras and its collection, see Elisabeth Scheicher, *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Habsburger,* ed. Christian Brandstätter (Vienna: Molden, 1979); Sabine Haag and Veronika Sandbichler, eds., *Ferdinand II: 450 Jahre Tiroler Landesfürst – Jubiläumsausstellung,* exh. cat., Ambras Castle, Innsbruck, June 15–October 8, 2017, Waldstein Riding School, Prague, November 3, 2017–February 25, 2018 (Innsbruck: Haymon, 2017), 77–87, 221–293.

4 Felmayer 1974 (see note 1).

5 David von Schönherr, "Urkunden und Regesten aus dem k. k. Statthalterei-Archiv in Innsbruck [3]," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 14 (1893): <LXXI–CCXIII, CLXXI, regest 10707, https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.5885.15. See also Felmayer 1974, 105, 107–108 (see note 1); Johanna Felmayer, "Silberne Kapelle," in *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Innsbruck*, ed. Johanna Felmayer, vol. 3, *Die Hofbauten,* Österreichische Kunsttopographie 47 (Vienna: Schroll, 1986): 427–448; Georg Tinkhauser, *Topographisch-historisch-statistische Beschreibung der Diözese Brixen: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kulturgeschichte und der noch vorhandenen Kunst- und Baudenkmale aus der Vorzeit,* vol. 2 (Brixen: Weger, 1879), 129–130.

6 Felmayer 1974, 137–140 (see note 1); Stefan Pichler, "Ein Meister der Manieristischen Intarsie in Innsbruck: Conrad Gottfried und der Fürstenchor der Innsbrucker Hofkirche," *Wissenschaftliches Jahrbuch der Tiroler Landesmuseen* 5 (2012): 397–411; David von Schönherr, "Alexander Colin und seine Werke: 1562–1612," *Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Heidelberger Schlosses* 2 (1890): 53–162, https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.3128.3.

7 Egg 1974, 91 (see note 1); Michael Krapf, "Alexander Colins Konzeption des Grabmals Erzherzog Ferdinands II. in der Silbernen Kapelle in Innsbruck," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 26 (1973): 199–207, 201–202, https://doi.org/10.7767/wjk.1973.26.1.199; David von Schönherr, "Urkunden und Regesten aus dem k. k. Statthalterei-Archiv

in Innsbruck [4]," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 17 (1896): I–CVIII, XXXVII, regests 14406, 14408, XLII, regest 14459, XLIII, regest 14471, https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.5904.11.

8 Felmayer 1974, 105, 125 (see note 1); Johann Baptist Schöpf, *Johannes Nasus, Franziskaner und Weihbischof von Brixen (1534–1590)* (Bozen: Josef Eberle, 1860), 52.

9 David von Schönherr, *David von Schönherrs gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Michael Mayr, vol. 1, *Kunstgeschichtliches* (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Buchhandlung, 1900), 352–353.

10 Christian G. Schulz, *Gottes Wort und fürstliche Macht: Silberaltäre des 17. Jahrhunderts zwischen München und Stockholm* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2021).

11 Schulz 2021, 14–23 (see note 10).

12 Schulz 2021, 194, 189–195 (see note 10).

13 Michael Forcher, *Erzherzog Ferdinand II. Landesfürst von Tirol: Sein Leben, seine Herrschaft, sein Land* (Innsbruck: Haymon Verlag, 2017), 186–209; Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 17–23.

14 Otto Stegmüller, "Canisius, Petrus," in *Lexikon der Marienkunde,* ed. Konrad Algermissen, Ludwig Böer, Georg Englhardt, Carl Feckes, Michael Schmaus, and Julius Tyciak, vol. 1, *Aachen bis Elisabeth* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1967): 1052–1054.

15 Robert John Weston Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550–1700: An Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 41.

16 Bridget Heal, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500-1648* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 148–206, in particular 149–161.

17 Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern Deutscher Zunge im 16. Jahrhundert,* vol. 1, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge im XVI. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1907), 72–76.

18 Duhr 1907, 66–91, 188–190, 685–712, 852 (see note 17).

19 Felmayer 1974, 125 (see note 1).

20 Schöpf 1860, 52, note 4 (see note 8); Tinkhauser 1879, 129 (see note 5).

21 Richard J. Oosterhoff, José Ramón Marcaida, and Alexander Marr, eds., *Ingenuity in the Making: Matter and Technique in Early Modern Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021).

22 Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39–46; Rosilie Hernández, *Immaculate Conceptions: The Power of the Religious Imagination in Early Modern Spain,* Toronto Iberic 42 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 24–30. See also Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance,* Monographs on Archaeology and Fine Arts 7 (New York: College Art Association of America, 1957), 5–13.

23 D'Ancona 1957, 10–11 (see note 22).

24 Hernández 2019, 5–7 (see note 22).

25 Only the two central figures have haloes. The second figure from the left can be identified as John the Baptist based on the axe under the figure's left hand as in Matthew 3:10. On the potential use of the grates for reliquaries, see Schulz 2021, 191 (see note 10).

26 Transcribed with scriptural references in Felmayer 1974, 112–113 (see note 1).

27 Haag and Sandbichler 2017, 288 (see note 3).

28 Special thanks to Charlotte Wytema who took the time to discuss her PhD research with me. Her thesis is titled "'Tota Pulchra es': the emergence, function and reception of the 'Virgin with Fifteen Symbols' imagery in France and the Southern Netherlands, 1477–1546." See also Emile Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France: Étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration,* vol. 3 (Paris: A. Colin, 1925), 214.

29 Walter Melion, "'Quae Lecta Canisius Offert et Spectata Diu': The Pictorial Images in Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* of 1577/1583," in *Early Modern Eyes,* ed. Walter Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 207–266, 207–209.

30 Mâle 1925, 124 (see note 28).

31 Alexander J. Fisher, "Thesaurus Litaniarum: The Symbolism and Practice of Musical Litanies in Counter-Reformation Germany," *Early Music History* 34 (2015): 45–95.

32 Fisher 2015, 68–69 (see note 31).

33 Fisher 2015, 45–95 (see note 31).

34 Schulz 2021, 189–195 (see note 10).

35 Franz Gratl, "Musik am Hof Erzherzog Ferdinands II. im Netzwerk dynastischer Beziehungen," in Haag and Sandbichler 2017 (see note 3): 61–66, 61; Walter Senn, *Musik und Theater am Hof zu Innsbruck: Geschichte der Hofkapelle vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zu deren Auflösung im Jahre 1748* (Innsbruck: Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1954), 70–74, 94–100.

36 Manfred Hauke, "Die Lauretanische Litanei: Systematische Aspekte Marianischer Volksfrömmigkeit," *Sedes Sapientiae: Mariologisches Jahrbuch* 15, no. 2 (2011): 56–88, 58; Nikolaus Paulus, "Die Einführung der lauretanischen Litanei in Deutschland durch den Seligen Canisius," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 26, no. 3 (1902): 574–583, 574–575.

37 Oskar Dünser, "Dr. Hippolit Guarinoni als Barocker Laienapostel," *Veröffentlichungen des Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum* 60 (1980): 5–34, 15.

38 David von Schönherr, "Urkunden und Regesten aus dem k. k. Statthalterei-Archiv in Innsbruck [2]," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 11 (1890): LXXXIV–CCXLI, CLXXXIV, regests 7376, 7378, https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.5770.13. See also Felmayer 1974, 101–102 (see note 1).

39 Erich Egg, "Die Baumeister der Damenstiftskirche zu Hall," in *Beiträge zur Kultur- und Kunstgeschichte Tirols,* ed. Nikolaus Grass, Schlern-Schriften 167 (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1962): 143–148.

40 Ort details his career stages in a petition for a pension and outstanding payment addressed to the Archduke's successor Matthias of Austria (1557–1619) following Ferdinand's death. Letter from Anton Ort to Mathiaß zu Össterreich, n. d. [after 1595], KS III 21.59, Tiroler Landesarchiv, Innsbruck. I am much indebted to Elisabeth Reitter for this reference and friendly exchange of information. A discussion of this and other sources relating to Archduke Ferdinand's court artists will be included in her forthcoming doctoral thesis entitled "Allerlay Diener. Hofkünstler und (Kunst)Handwerker Erzherzog Ferdinands II. (1567–1595)."

41 Felmayer 1974, 126 (see note 1); Pichler 2012, 396–411 (see note 6).

42 The scenes unfold as follows: 1. Annunciation, 2. Nativity, 3. Adoration, 4. Presentation at the Temple, 5. Flight to Egypt, 6. Christ among the Doctors, 7. Road to Calvary, 8. Crucifixion, 9. Decent from the Cross, 10. Entombment, 11. Resurrection, 12. Ascension, 13. Pentecost, 14. Assumption of the Virgin, 15. Coronation of the Virgin (altar). 7 and 11 are uncoupled from the other scenes and flank the Archduke's coat of arms in the center.

43 Later restoration of the medallions which have impacted the stylistic appearance likely also discouraged scholarly consideration. Felmayer 1974, 121–126 (see note 1); Egg 1974, 88 (see note 1).

44 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Seraphim | Seraphin, n." (November 2018), https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4377271610.

45 Schulz 2021, 189–195 (see note 10).

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56 Kessler 2011, 56 (see note 55).

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