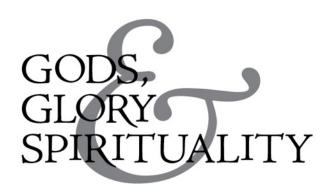


HISTORICAL FICTIONS OF THE SIGMUND MORGENROTH COLLECTION OF RENAISSANCE MEDALS AND PLAQUETTES





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Front Cover:
Francesco da Sangallo
(Italian, 1494-1576)
Francesco da Sangallo and Elena
Marsuppini (reverse) (1551)
Bronze
99 mm (3 3/4")

99 mm (3 3/4") Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of September 1, 2022 – January 22, 2023 Art, Design & Architecture Museum University of California, Santa Barbara www.museum.ucsb.edu



How does a story become legend?

Gods, Glory & Spirituality: Historical Fictions of the Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes seeks an answer with a selection of Renaissance medals and plaquettes, the originals of which span almost 400 years. This exhibition includes historical fictions written by students, whose modern tales of adventure, intrigue, and tests of faith reframe the Renaissance works of art.

A founding collection of the AD&A Museum, the group of approximately 430 medals and plaquettes—assembled primarily between 1927 and 1939 by longtime Santa Barbara resident Sigmund Morgenroth and acquired by the Museum in 1964—is one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the world.

The art of the medal emerged during the Renaissance as interest in classical art and culture spread throughout Europe. Medals not only memorialize influential individuals and epic events, but they also serve as historical documents for the artistic, poetic, and intellectual energies of the period. Portrait medals, as well as religious, mythological, and historical plaquettes were displayed alongside paintings, drawings, and sculptures in 16th- and 17th-century cabinet collections. While bronze was favored, medals made from silver, a significant resource for the economies of Augsburg and Nuremberg in commercial trade and goldsmith production, gained a coveted place among German princes and patricians. In these lands, too, carved stone and wooden models developed into collector items, likely due to the popularity of the medal as an art form. In the hands of the fiction writer, the medal as a historical document of Renaissance values is reimagined.

Gods, Glory & Spirituality is organized by the Art, Design & Architecture Museum in collaboration with William Thompson, Assistant Professor of History at Northwest University, and his students from Historical Fiction (UCSB, Spring 2020), and is curated by Sophia Quach McCabe, Academic Coordinator.

¿Cómo se convierte una historia en leyenda?

Dioses, gloria y espiritualidad ofrece una respuesta a través de una selección de medallas y placas cuyos originales se remontan a hace casi 400 años. La exposición incluye también una serie de ficciones históricas escritas por estudiantes que reformulan el arte renacentista a través de relatos modernos de aventura, intriga y pruebas de fe.

Esta selección de aproximadamente 430 medallas y placas fue adquirida en su mayor parte entre 1927 y 1939 por Sigmund Morgenroth, conocido residente de Santa Bárbara. Pasaría a formar parte del museo en 1964, convirtiéndose en una de sus primeras y más importantes colecciones. Todavía hoy está reconocida como una de las más completas del mundo de su categoría.

El arte de las medallas surge en el renacimiento ligado al interés por el arte y la cultura clásicas que se extendió por toda Europa. Las medallas no solo conmemoran a personas influyentes o momentos épicos, también sirven como documentos históricos del dinamismo artístico, poético e intelectual de la época. Tanto medallas con retratos como placas con motivos religiosos, mitológicos e históricos solían exhibirse en los gabinetes de curiosidades de los siglos XVI y XVII junto a pinturas, dibujos y esculturas. Aunque el

bronce fue el material por excelencia, las medallas de plata –un recurso importante en las economías de las ciudades de Augsburgo y Núremberg, donde florecerían el comercio y la producción de orfebrería– también tuvieron un lugar destacado entre los príncipes y patriarcas alemanes. En estos territorios, medallas en piedra y madera tallada se convirtieron igualmente en objetos de colección, probablemente por la popularidad de las medallas como piezas artísticas. En las manos del escritor de ficción, las medallas –en tanto testimonio de los valores renacentistas– son reimaginadas.

Dioses, gloria y espiritualidad fue organizada por el Museo de Arte, Diseño y Arquitectura (AD&D) en colaboración con William Thompson, profesor de la Facultad de Historia en la Universidad Northwest, junto a sus estudiantes del curso Ficción Histórica (UCSB, Primavera 2020) y curada por Sophia Quach McCabe, coordinadora académica.





Pastorino di Giovan Michele de Pastorini, "Pastorino" (Italian, 1508-1592) Grazia Nasi of Siena (16th-century) Bronze 66 mm (25/8") Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.334

PORTRAIT MEDALS

Inspired by imperial Roman coinage, the portrait medal was highly prized among princes, popes, merchants, writers, and artists. It combined a poignant likeness of a person on one side (the obverse), a symbolic image indicating the individual's aspirations and achievements on the other (the reverse), and an inscription. Small enough to fit into one's hands, the precious portable work of art doubled as a gift and an instrument of propaganda. It could be displayed in a cabinet collection or worn as jewelry. In other instances, artists, such as medalist and sculptor Francesco da Sangallo, created self-portrait medals in order to distinguish themselves and to market their virtuosic skills.

Pisanello, the inventor of the Renaissance portrait medal, developed techniques of casting from wax models for medal production. His portrait of Emperor John VIII Palaeologus of Constantinople commemorated the emperor's visit to Ferrara in 1438 to attend the ecumenical council of the Greek and Latin churches. Likely the first medal produced by Pisanello, it is considered the earliest example of this Renaissance art form.





Pisanello (Antonio Pisano)
(b. Italy, ca. 1395–1455)
John VIII Palaeologus, Emperor of
Constantinople, 1438–1439
Lead
110 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.194

Emperor John VIII and His Shattered Empire

Pisanello's portrait medal of John VIII Palaeologus recalls the Emperor-Commander's victory against the Ottomans. On June 10, 1422, Ottoman troops, led by Murad II, bombarded Constantino-ple's city walls with cannonballs fired from falcons, light canon artillery mounted on ships. The ene-my's blockade of the city's ports starved her people. Under the command of Emperor John VIII, the Byzantine army fought valiantly, using the impenetrable city walls as defense. However, the Emper-or realized that without a proper navy against the enemy's ships, Constantinople would fall once its granary supply emptied. John VIII enacted a daring plan: he sent his best soldiers on a mission to seize an Ottoman ship under pretense of defection. Once on board, they torched the ship, using it as a carrier to burn through the Ottoman supply of food and arms. Murad's eventual defeat quickly ushered a retreat with his janissaries. With this victory, John VIII proved a capable heir to the Byzan-tine throne and ignited hope to other kingdoms that the Ottomans could be defeated.

Denny Zhao, History, 2021





Andrea Guacialoti (Guazzalotti)
(Italian, 1435-1495)
Alfonso II of Aragon, Duke of Calabria (1481)
Bronze
61 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.268

Lucrezia's Secret

The marriage of Alfonso of Aragon and Lucrezia Borgia in 1498 was wrought with mystery from the start. Lucrezia was not Alfonzo's first choice in a suitor, as their marriage was arranged by Alfonso's father Ferdinand I and Lucrezia's father Alexander VI. Between the wedding and their departure from Rome, Lucrezia became pregnant with their first child, but suffered a miscarriage. Or at least that is what Alfonso and his family were told.

In reality, Lucrezia gave birth early and hid the child from Alfonso. She could sense conflict in the air from her father's shifting loyalty away from Italy to France. Lucrezia sent the child to France, using her political connections to ensure he would always be cared for, yet never know of his royal heritage. Under the name Remy LeBon, he became a pocket thief who never went hungry but was also always longing for more.

Upon his mother 's death, the church accidentally revealed Remy's lineage to him. Learning of his mother and father, he grew hateful, and resented the fact that he was living a fallacy of pov-erty. With the burden of what he wanted to do given how he felt, Remy went to Italy to pray at St. Peter's Basilica. Outside the church, he saw his father, surrounded by guards, wearing golden rings, and awaiting his carriage. This sight sent him into a blind rage and he stabbed his father on the steps of the Basilica. He attempted to take the body, but the guards prevented such action. He was only able to rip away this medal, which became the only memory he would keep of his father.

Michael Capovilla, History, 2021





Artist unknown
(Italian, last half of 15th-century)
Cosimo de Medici, Pater Patriae (1465-1469)
Bronze
72 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.286

Aut Caesar, aut nihil (All or nothing)

Two young clerks are resting under the shadow of a camphor tree. Pierre opens his palm revealing a quaint, rusty medal. "I picked up this coin on my way this morning. Do you think it's worth a franc?"

"What's engraved on it?" Sorrel pokes his head to see the effigy more clearly, "Oh, he reminds me of your late grandpa."

"Oui, he does look like a chef." Pierre smiles, "Only chefs wear funny hats like that." He rubs his thumb against the puce rust muddying the man's chin, but the layer is too thick to be scraped off.

"What is on the other side?"

Pierre flips the coin over onto his palm. The reverse is less stained, and shows an image of a lady holding an olive branch under her arm. A smile climbs up to Sorrel's lips. "She is too fleshy for me."

Pierre pays no attention to his words. He rotates the coin slowly in his hand, the inscription along the edge flickers in the sunshine. "PPP."..Do you know what that stands for?"

"I would be at a church chanting mass if I knew any Latin." Sorrel shrugs his shoulders, "Your name is Pierre Paul Paret, maybe it's your lucky token."

Pierre tosses the coin into the air. The rusty medal seems to absorb all the light around it, forming a small black hole in the sky, before falling on the ground. Neither Sorrel nor Pierre picks it up. They carry their portfolios under their arms, walking lazily back to the road. Their shadows dis-appear as the coin silently sinks into mud, burying the old man's rusty face once more.

Matilda Ning, Financial Math & Statistics and French, 2020



Antonio Abondio
(Italian, 1538-1626)
Girolamo Scotti, Sorcerer, Alchemist, and
Adventurer of Piacenza (probably 1580)
Lead
45 x 37 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.325

The Escape Acts of Houdini Have Nothing on This Man

That's right. Forget the sensational escape acts of Houdini. This man escaped the Holy Ro-man Empire four centuries earlier while simultaneously performing card tricks for Queen Elizabeth I of England and avoiding accusations of witchcraft. Girolamo Scotti hypnotized powerful men, se-duced women, stole their riches and disappeared into the abyss. In 1602, Scotti landed in England to meet with an old friend, Queen Elizabeth. On arrival, he offered the Queen and her court 2,500 guilders' worth of precious stones as a gift for her hospitality. The Queen welcomed Scotti, noting his success at amassing great wealth and fortune on his travels. During his stay he performed re-markable illusions for her and her guests at court for a handsome payment. He would turn their bread into medals, read their thoughts and present 'magical meals' without any preparationno one could work out how. A few months passed, and Scotti bid farewell to the Queen. The royal household became increasingly overwhelmed with guests' queries about lost possessions, such as precious stones, jewelry, buttons and even medals. It was only a few months later when a messen-ger from the Holy Roman Empire arrived with a decree for Scotti, who had escaped from the Hamburg Senate after stealing 10,000 guilders of jewelry from a Duchess in Coburg. Queen Elizabeth forbade the practice of magic in her court from then on, and never saw him again.

Ella Wheeler



Pastorino di Giovan Michele de Pastorini, "Pastorino" (Italian, 1508-1592) Grazia Nasi of Siena (16th-century) Bronze 66 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.334

The Medalist and the Bride

Grazia sat in the garden trying to stay still. She could tell that Pastorino de' Pastorini was get-ting annoyed. How much longer must he sketch? She knew that having her portrait reproduced on a medal was a great honor, but she was just not in the mood that day. Besides, it was almost noon and she had to take her leave of the sun. Pastorino showed no signs of stopping, so she steeled herself and tried to enjoy the sun's rays and the sound of the birds singing around her while wear-ing her favorite frock. She was very tired, unable to sleep again the previous night, tossing and turn-ing while worrying about her upcoming wedding to Samuel Nasi. Even in Constantinople, Aunt Grazia, her namesake, was trying to run her life. She missed her mother. If she had not died so unex-pectedly, Grazia would have liked the benefit of her advice about the wedding. Grazia had always been torn between her mother and her aunt, but with her mother gone now, she felt obligated to be grateful for her aunt's care. She sighed as old feelings of resentment toward her aunt reappeared. She didn't want to think about that horrible day, being forcibly taken from Venice and coerced into marrying John! Thank goodness that marriage was annulled. Now she would marry his brother Samuel. After the nuptials, Aunt Grazia would work it out with the Duke to let her, Samuel, and all of her money, leave Ferrara.

Sierra Brown, History, 2020



Albrecht Dürer (after)
(b. Germany, 1471–1528)
Willibald Pirckheimer of Eichstatt, 1517
Silver
74 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.345

My Dearest Friend Willibald

July 1517

My dearest Willibald,

I am writing to you in hopes that you received the silver medal I made in your likeness. I tried my best to capture your good side, even though we both know you do not have one. I know how much you love your fine furs, so I made sure to include them as well. Amongst all the friends I have made from Venice to the Netherlands, you, Sir, stand head and shoulders above the rest. As a man who never received a formal education, you are the closest thing to a teacher I have ever had. Our con-versations on humanist philosophy have inspired my works more than you will ever know. You have introduced me to some of the greatest thinkers of our time, including our great mutual friend Desid-erius Erasmus. Twelve years ago, when I had no money to travel to Venice in order to paint the al-tarpiece commissioned for the San Bartolomeo church, it was you who loaned me the money. For your friendship, wisdom, and service to Nuremberg, I am forever grateful. I hope you enjoy this medal as a small token of my appreciation for you.

Your closest friend,

Albrecht Dürer

(cont'd)



Albrecht Dürer (after)
(b. Germany, 1471–1528)
Willibald Pirckheimer of Eichstatt, 1517
Silver
74 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.345

August 1517

My finest friend Albrecht,

I am writing to let you know that I have in fact received your gift. I am glad that you captured my good side, as metal lasts for eternity. While your token of appreciation is very thoughtful, I would be remiss to say that I have not gained an equal amount from our friendship over the years. It has been truly amazing to see you grow from a promising young artist in Nuremberg, to one who is mentioned amongst the likes of Bellini, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci. Who would have ever thought that the son of a Hungarian goldsmith would grow up to become one of the most prolific artists on the conti-nent? Your friendship to me has been invaluable and I thank you again for the exquisite medal.

Yours truly,

Willibald Pirckheimer

Zach Johnson, History of Public Policy, 2020



Artist unknown, German
Emperor Charles V, mid 16th c.
Boxwood with modern frame
67.5 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.369

The Defense of the Holiness

As a baron to Our Majesty, King Charles V, I was beyond honored to have my army join the King on His crusade—the most meaningful endeavor of my life and those of my army, for this is a campaign that is worthy of being sung.

After an absurd challenge from the Protestant princes of Germany who, in the style of the lust-ful Henry VIII, sought to separate themselves from the Catholic church to a secular god, our Majesty confessed to me that a loyal subject informed him about the tension amongst the Protestants over the way they would place themselves in false positions. King Charles V, a loyal servant of the Catholic faith and His will, was rightly offended by the secularization that was occurring and exclaimed to the Pope how there should be more forward and rightful action against the heretics in defense of the faith. From my most humble observations, I could see that of all the troubles my King had, the one that disturbed him most was that of the heretical rulers, for he knows there is nothing more painful to God than a false religion under His name.

The fateful time came at the end of April, when the King determined that it was only appropri-ate to quell the heresy. Our troops and those of other loyal servants to the King totaled ten thousand who marched with him to Mühlberg. God was on our side and that of our intentions, for we obtained a victory for Him, with few losses. Our just King was able to return the rebellious kingdoms to Catho-lic ways, for which the people cheered and paraded for him. For our King and His faithful legacy, I pray, for I cannot observe any evil in our foreseeable future.

Miguelangel Coria-Cornejo, Sociology, 2021





Alessandro Vittoria
(b. Italy, 1525–1608)
Pietro Aretino, Il Divino, of Arezzo,ca. 1553
Bronze
58 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.317

The Scourge of Princes

""The scourge of princes, the divine Pietro Aretino,' hehehe," smiles Alessandro Vittoria to himself as he considers the praise penned by Ludovico Ariosto about his friend. Since the 1520s, Aretino was celebrated and feared by the populi and rulers alike. His searing tongue, quick wit, and penchant for ribald humor earned him an attempt on his life—and consequently his departure from Rome—and, strangely enough, golden chains from the king of France and the empress of Portugal.

Vittoria continues shaping his wax model of Aretino's face for a soon-to-be-cast bronze me-dallion. The "scourge" is also quite vain. Aretino requested explicitly the inclusion of fine clothing and jewelry in the production of the medal by the rising star sculptor of Venice. The reception of Ve-netian master Tiziano's painting of Aretino—dressed in a silk coat with a fur collar and a heavy gold chain, completed around 1537—prompted Vittoria to use it as a model for his portrait medal. With deliberate incisions into the soft wax, Vittoria brought out another feature of Aretino's personality and talents: the alert, sharp eyes of a fox that never misses an opportunity, the long, straight nose of his Florentine ancestors, and that full, woolly beard of a philosopher—but one whose philosophy wades into the depraved waters of human nature.

Aretino's words strike at the hearts of men, whether prince, pauper, or pope. As the poet and satirist proclaimed in his book Dialogues, "Those who should live in their monasteries as lilies do in their gardens have covered themselves with the muck of the world, so that not only heaven but the very abyss is revolted by them." Vittoria ponders ways to express his patron and friend's outspoken persona and influence on the arts and literature of





Hans Schwarz
(b. Germany, 1492–after 1521)

ASebald IV Pfinzing, Burgomaster of
Nuremberg, 1519
Silvered bronze
47 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.347

Italy. At last, the appropriate inscription for the protector of the people and the "scourge of princes" emerges: I Principi Tributati dai Popoli il Servo Loro Tributano ("The princes, who receive tribute from their people, pay tribute to their servant").

T.N. Holmes

Sebald IV Pfinzing: A Minor Charlemagne

Portrait medals by German artists, such as Albrecht Dürer and Hans Schwarz, bore prestige and power for rulers throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Schwarz is credited as the first pro-fessional medalist in Germany. In his portrait medal of Sebald IV of Pfinzing, burgomaster, or mayor, of Nuremberg, Schwarz intentionally employed a style reminiscent of coins minted during the reign of Charlemagne (r. 768-800), such as the noble profile encircled by a Latin script. Sebald's medal, unlike Charlemagne's coin, depicts a family crest on the reverse. Though Sebald was only a mildly important member of the Hohenzollern house, his connection to the family who ruled Nuremberg's environs for centuries allowed him legitimacy. As the leader of his city, Sebald sought to portray himself as an "ideal" ruler in the likeness of Charlemagne through his commission to Schwarz. The portrait medal was located prominently in Nuremburg's town hall so that everyone who passed through encountered the burgomaster with the crest of the Hohenzollern dynasty, reminders of Se-bald's power and legitimacy.

Adeline Barron-Merritt, History and MUSST, 2021





Francesco da Sangallo (b. Italy, 1494–1576) Francesco da Sangallo and Elena Marsuppini, 1551 Bronze 99 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.329

Measuring One's Talent in Millimeters: The Artistic Journey of Francesco da Sangallo

Francesco da Sangallo was sculptor, military engineer, draughtsman and medalist. He also worked alongside Michelangelo, producing grand works in the Renaissance. Born into a prominent Italian family of architects, Francesco had countless opportunities, yet he was a believer in meritoc-racy and was keen to prove his own talent. The patronage of the Florentine Medici family signaled true success for him, as they were arguably the most influential family within Italy. Indeed, Frances-co received commissions to sculpt the tomb of Bishop Marzi Medici in 1546 as well as the tomb of Bishop Bonafede in 1533.

Even with the support of such powerful patrons, the artist remained keen to challenge himself in a different way. Francesco's signature style of emotional naturalism was easier to convey in lifesize sculpture. Thus, he thought he would be able to prove his talent as a brilliant Renaissance art-ist if he could encapsulate this same emotion on a medal measuring mere millimeters. The artist completed his self-portrait medal in 1551. The minute details and high relief of the work impressed his viewers and patrons, as they were truly enamored with how he managed to capture the likeness of his furrowed brow, clenched jaw, and beard whereby every strand of hair was visible.

To express so much in such little space was such an achievement. Several wealthy Italian families flocked to hire Francesco, whilst other artists attempted to recreate his work. Knowing he could execute bril-liance in anything from a medal to a tomb, Francesco's career flourished and he co-founded Flor-ence's Accademia del Disegno, where he instilled in his students the same passion for all art forms.

Faith Cotter



Artist unknown (German, last half of 16th-century) Saint George Killing the Dragon (last half of 16th-century) Lead 27 x 33 mm (7/8 x 1 5/16") Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.595

Religious Plaquettes

Religious plaquettes served devotional needs. Those that decorated liturgical objects, such as a pax, were likely kissed or touched during mass. Smaller plaquettes could be carried in the pockets of their owners during pilgrimage. Unlike the portrait medal, the plaquette generally featured a design on the obverse, while the reverse remained unadorned. Accompanied by modern historical fictions, Renaissance religious plaquettes resonate anew.



Ulocrino (b. Italy, active ca. 1485–1530)
St. Cecilia, early 16th c.
Bronze
71 x 53 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.402

God's Heavenly Music

Cecilia was in mourning for her late husband, Valerian, who had been executed a month prior. Of late, she often reminisced about their wedding, and hearing beautiful, heavenly music to God in her heart. How she longed to go back and hear that music once more. Valerian had been killed for his dedication to burying Christian martyrs murdered in Rome by the city's prefect, Almachius. Cecilia could not help but blame herself, since she had encouraged Valerian's baptism and his subsequent religious activities. She vowed to now dedicate her life's work to converting non-Christians, so that her husband's death would not be in vain. That morning, Cecilia wandered the streets of Trastevere, seeking a willing audience. It was early, so more than anything, she sought solace in the presence of others, and affirmation that her cause was a just one. In the distance, Ce-cilia could hear a faint, beautiful melody from a wind instrument, accompanied by a soft, youthful voice. Her interest piqued, Cecilia endeavored to locate the music's source. After walking along many cobbled streets, she encountered three young girls with the instrument. They immediately stopped playing at her approach, glancing at each other nervously with their cheeks flushed. But Cecilia smiled warmly at them, encouraging them to play on. The girls began once more, and Cecil-ia sat down opposite, contented. She had sought solace and an affirmation of her faith, and that is what she found. Little did she know that it would come from a simple, joyous melody, and played by strangers at that. She realized that such a connection to music was the answer to her woes. When her faith faltered, God's heavenly music brought coherence to her life's work.

Hannah Whitehall



Moderno (Galeazzo Mondella)
(b. Italy, 1467–1528)

Judgment of Solomon, late 15th–early 16th c.
Bronze
67 x 38 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.420

The Decisions of a King, and of Soldiers

The tan wooden door swung open with a thud, dust falling from the shaking frame. In the now empty doorway stood a silhouette of a man holding a sword in his right hand. Slowly, he stepped into the room. As he entered, the light returned to reveal his clothing, a collection of leather gar-ments strapped onto his body. Like many soldiers, this was a man unable to afford armor. However, he did what he could to stay safe. The room was almost empty, save for a table surrounded by di-sheveled chairs strewn about the cold, dirt ground. Three bowls, each containing a dark, steaming soup, appeared atop the table.

The man progressed deliberately, and entered the next room. His eyes scanned the ground, drawing up to the rest of the dimly lit space. In the corner, breathing slowly out of fear, crouched a man and a woman dressed in ragged clothing. Peeking out from behind them, a child stared with fear and curiosity.

The family began speaking rapidly in Italian, gesturing towards their child, and the pots and pans in the kitchen, seemingly begging the man to take the latter and leave them alone. The man looked on in confusion. He was French, he did not understand their language. However, as they continued pleading, his eyes were drawn toward the flickering flame of the oil lamp. On the wall above the lamp was a plaquette, masterfully engraved. Upon it, he saw the image of King Solomon of Israel, and immediately recognized that this was a Christian home, and was reminded of the teachings of his church at home, further north. As his attention returned to the family in the corner, he relaxed, and slowly backed his way out of the house.

Ryan McNeil, History, 2020



Artist unknown, Italian?
Holy Family, ca. 1500
Bronze
92 x 84 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.497

The Nurturing of the Savior

Mary was determined to give her son a normal childhood. Despite knowing that she was looking at the earthly face of her God every time she looked at him, she tried to treat his siblings the same way she treated him. She wanted to give him this life because she knew that one day, he would have to leave her and fulfill his calling. She knew he would have to go prove himself. And knowing that her precious son would have to endure such hardship made her even more intent on making his child-hood as happy and carefree as she could make it.

In time, Jesus became an older brother to sibling after sibling. He played with and cared for his brothers and sisters and tried to help his parents teach them right from wrong. He told them sto-ries and taught them lessons and helped them with their chores. He roughhoused with his brothers (careful never to hurt them) and played pretend with his sisters. He was a favorite of the older neighbors because he volunteered anytime they requested a helping hand. He was an attentive student to Joseph when he was old enough to begin learning the craft of carpentry and he gave Jo-seph the respect of calling him 'father,' despite knowing the all-powerful Creator was his true Father. He tried, in everything, to make his parents proud and to be the best son and brother he could be.

Joseph tried to be the best father figure he could be for the son he knew was not fully his. He tried to teach him how to be a man and how to lead his family in faith. He loved the boy as his own and showed it in any way that he could.

Makayla Sodeman, Psychology and History, 2020



Moderno (Galeazzo Mondella)
(b. Italy, 1467–1528)
Virgin and Child with Sts. Anthony Abbot and Jerome, late 15th–early 16th c.
Silver, partially gilt
107 x 64 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.415

Divine Intervention

St. Peter's Basilica, 1571 – Pope Pius V has just finished blessing the banner destined for Naples. The pope looks at the banner again before handing it to a messenger, exclaiming, "Wait! Take this and make sure it is given only to John of Austria." He places a small item and a letter in the mes-senger's hands along with the banner. As the messenger departs, the Pope says to himself, "That is one of my most beloved possessions, but I know only a miracle will grant us a victory. I only hope John will seek the aid of these saints as I have."

Kingdom of Naples, 1571 – John of Austria, commander of the fleet of the Holy League, stands outside the Basilica of Santa Chiara, having just received the papal banner. A bishop ap-proaches, handing John a small item with a letter, "There is something else. The Holy Father asked to give this to you alone." John unfolds the letter to read its contents:

I give this to you from my personal collection. Keep this with your person at all times. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints Anthony Abbot and Jerome, may Christ protect you and give our Holy League victory against these Saracen invaders. PAX CHRISTI.

John unwraps the item enclosed in a cloth, revealing a metallic plaquette depicting the Virgin Mary carrying the Child Jesus and Saints Anthony Abbot and Jerome.

Off the coast of Lepanto, 1571 – John of Austria stands near the helm of his ship as a sailor runs to him yelling, "The Saracen fleet has been spotted!" John of Austria responds with a com-mand to his troops, "Battle formation!" Taking out the plaquette, John looks at it, praying, "Please Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God! And Saints Anthony Abbot and Jerome. Pray for us!" Kissing the plaquette, John places it in the pocket closest to his chest and puts on his armor.

Jacob Valdez, History, 2020



Nicolas Mostaert (Nicolò Pippi / Nicolò Piper d'Arras) (b. France, ca. 1530–d. Rome, 1599) after Michelangelo (b. Italy, 1475–1564) Descent from the Cross, n.d. Bronze appliqué, gilt 381 x 305 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.502

Thrift Store Finds

"Wow, this is so heavy," I mutter to myself as I lift the plaquette, caught off guard by how much it weighed. The thrift stores in my area are not very exciting and rarely have any items that I find worthwhile. Today is different though. On this particular day, I walk my usual route around the shop when I come across what I instantly recognize to be a bronze-gilt piece. I know this because my mother has been a bronze collector ever since I could remember, having spent countless hours helping her collect and clean these beautiful bronze pieces.

As I approach the object, I immediately recognize the famous composition of Christ being taken down from the cross after his crucifixion. The figures at the base of the plaquette rest on one another in sadness and lament, representing their overwhelming sense of loss. My eyes look up from the base of the cross, and I see ladders being mounted and climbed by nameless faces who reach up in an attempt to help. In the center of it all hovers Christ's lifeless body, his limbs wrapped around the arms of those who lower him from the cross. I stare at the scene before me for what feels like forever, scanning over the intricate and miniscule details, such as the creases in the clothing.

What a sad yet powerful scene this is to recreate. I would not consider myself a religious per-son but there is no denying that the intense emotions portrayed in the work have had an effect on me.

The cashier rings me up and I leave, driving towards my mother's house in silence.

Yvette Garcia, History, 2020



Artist unknown, Italian (Venetian)
The Incredulity of St. Thomas,
second half 16th c.
Bronze
78 x 59 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.377

A Sea of Heads Sees the Truth

The disciples returned from their threeday march through the city of fallen angels. Exhausted from performing miracles and expelling demons from young children, they rejoiced after an unex-pected visit from Jesus. They couldn't wait to share the good news with Thomas. "We have seen the Lord!" they exclaimed, but mere words were not enough to convince his wandering eyes. He claimed that he would believe only if he sees the nail marks in Jesus's hands and touches Christ's side. A shock of worry swept across the rest of the disciples. Simon paced the interior of his room, unaware if his mind was clouded because he kept repeating the disbelief of Thomas, or because his sandals had created a cloud of dust up to the ceiling of the room. Not knowing what to do, he cried out to the sky, "Jesus, what did you do those three days you were dead because this problem is going to last more than the weekend." Eight days later, Jesus appeared among his disciples once more. He walked into the room where they lay, checking their stone tablets and reading the latest news on the hottest miracles being performed all across the land. "Peace be among you," Je-sus said and motioned for Thomas to approach him. "I heard you were doubting my resurrection, so here I am asking you to do what you so desired. Put your finger here, see my hand, and reach out your hand and put it in my side." Shocked and amazed, Thomas fell onto his knees and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Although the rest of Christ's disciples previously saw and believed, they stood amazed at seeing his wounds as physical evidence of his existence.

Aryn Amezcual, History, 2021



Artist unknown, German
St. George Killing the Dragon,
second half 16th c.
Lead
27 x 33 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.495

St. George, Dragon Slayer

On his morning ride near the city of Silene, George of Lydda came upon a young woman with her dog sitting near the edge of a pond. She was sobbing. The gallant young knight slowed his horse's stride, stopping to offer some help. A low growl rumbled through the still air, rippling the wa-ters. While George tried in vain to comfort the distressed woman, two tiny dragons leapt from the pond, and pounced upon his unsuspecting steed. With their sharp teeth, the creatures tore into the horse's flesh. One reared its head and clamped its jaws onto the knight's left foot, like a bear trap. George made the sign of the cross, unsheathed his sword, and stabbed the creature, slamming his blade through the dragon's snout. The woman screamed. Her furry companion leapt to protect his mistress, the princess of Silene. But in the confusion, the canine attacked George's horse.

As the soon-to-be saint battled the second creature, a great shadow moved slowly across the grounds. Turning his head upwards and stabbing his foe between the eyes, George caught sight of a dragon blowing green puffs of smoke over the countryside. The princess of Silene cried out, "It's here. It's here for me." She hurriedly explained to the gallant knight of her duty as sacrificial food in order to save her people and country from the dragon's poisonous breath. Not to be outdone by the potential heroics of a woman, George waited for the ferocious mama dragon to land. Finally, the ghastly creature, covered in shimmering hardened scales, swooped down, and landed with a loud crack! upon the ground. Excited to feed her little ones, the dragon turned towards the princess. Spear in hand, George charged.

T.N. Holmes



Artist unknown (Italian, early 16th-century)

Horsemen Fighting (early 16th-century)

Bronze
63 x 100 mm (2 1/2 x 3 3/4")

Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.449

Mythological and Historical Plaquettes

Mythological and historical plaquettes demonstrate the Renaissance enthusiasm toward Greek and Roman legends. These plaquettes were displayed in early art collections alongside painting and sculpture of the same classical and heroic subjects. A number of these works embellished utilitarian items, such as hats, swords, and arms and armor. For instance, the plaquette depicting Roman legend *Horatius Cocles Defending the Bridge* previously served as the pommel decorating the hilt of a sword. Most plaquettes, however, were designed and produced as independent collectibles.



Artist unknown, Italian
Wreath with Gorgon's Head and Two Putti,
ca. 1500
Bronze
106 x 199 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.404

Monsters Scare Away Other Monsters

A little boy comes running into the bedroom with tears down his face. His loud screams jolt his par-ents awake. A sudden flash illuminates their wide-eyed faces and thunder drowns out the boy's cry-ing. The father begrudgingly climbs out of bed and walks the son toward his bedroom. As they walk through the hall, rain is falling hard. The father holds the boy's hand and reassures him. The son thought he saw a monster in the trees from his window. The flash exposed a terrifying creature. The evil could not hide from the spontaneous strikes of lighting revealing the darkness. They reach the bedroom and the father places the boy on his bed. He looks out the window and sees nothing. He looks around the room in every nook and cranny in order to assure the son that he is safe. The son is still not satisfied and refuses to allow the father to leave. An idea strikes the father and he calls to his wife to grab a box from his study. Inside the box is



Moderno (Galeazzo Mondella) (b. Italy, 1467–1528) Hercules Wrestling with a Centaur, late 1480s or 1490s Bronze 68 x 54 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.435

a corroded copper plate with the image of a woman's head, its horrifying scowl surrounded by snakes for hair. At first the image worries the boy, but the father explains that the menacing face will scare away monsters. The plaquette has been protecting this family for generations. The father looks out the window and challenges any evil to try and harm his family. Anything that tries will meet a terrible fate and be turned to stone. The father places the metal tablet on the stand next to the bed with its eyes facing the window. The son is now sleeping as the mother and father depart.

Samuel Sanchez, History, 2021

Hercules and his Thirteenth Labor!

The Greek myth of Hera sending Hercules into a blinding rage that resulted in the death of his wife Megara and their children sets the stage for the heroic battle portrayed on the plaquette. In order to repent for the crimes, King Eurystheus ordered Hercules to complete twelve Labors: the kill-ing of the Neman lion, the death of the hydra, the capture of the stag of Arcadia, the capture of the wild boar of Mount Erymanthos, the cleaning of King Augeas's stables in one day, the death of the Stymphalian maneating birds, the capture the Cretan bull, and the man-eating mares of King Dio-medes, taking the belt of Hippolyte, capturing the cattle of Geryon, stealing golden apples from the Hesperides's garden, and the supposed last Labor was to bring Cerberus from the Underworld and back to the earth. Once Hercules finished, everything went well for him and his family, as he was welcomed



Master of the Martelli Mirror
(b. Italy, late 15th or early 16th c.)
A Satyr and a Bacchante (Allegory of Reproduction), ca. 1500 (?)
Bronze
181 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.485

How Lewd Desires Turn Men Into Brutes

The Bacchante on the right is pouring her breast milk into a rhyton, a conical container meant for drinking. As the Bacchante was a follower of Dionysus, the God of wine and festivity, the milk she produces would inebriate any man who drank it and entice him into a never-ending cycle of intoxi-cating pleasure. The more he would consume, the more the world around him would become an elusive field of beauty, a world seemingly filled with abundant food, entertainment, and riches. But he would also grow dependent on this milk, gradually transforming into a more lustful, more vulgar, and more indiscernible creature over time, much like the Satyr seen to the left of the Bacchante.

The Satyr is lifting his left hand in the gesture of the horns, embracing his individuality as well as celebrating the situation that surrounds him. His dependency on the Bacchante is noticeable in that he has grown stout in size, yet he still looks towards her in order to fulfill his desires. The Satyr, who is a beast by nature, represents the most hideous version of a man. In other words, one who fails to resist his lewd desires and deepest temptations is essentially no different from—and is in fact a reflection of—this gruesome beast. The Bacchante, on the other hand, is the mediator between mankind and the gods and thus represents the trials men face in their lives—if one successfully resists profligacy and extravagance, adhering instead to a life of moderation, he is then able to enjoy the pleasures he seeks without transforming into a brute.

Shekina Medalla, Sociology and History, 2020



Prospero Spani (?) (Il Clemente) (b. Italy, 1516–1584) Hercules and Atlas, n.d. Terracotta 124 x 129 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.480

A Fool's Errand

The Greek hero and demigod Hercules, son of Zeus, slaughtered his children and his wife, Megara under the influence of Olympian Queen Hera's jealous rage. A consultation with the Oracle of Delphi led Hercules to find that his only path to redemption was the completion of twelve arduous labors devised by King Eurystheus of Mycenae. The eleventh labor forced him to retrieve the Gold-en Apples of the Hesperides and seek the aid of Atlas.

Atlas bore the immense weight of the sky as punishment for his opposition of the Olympians in their war against the Titans. Sensing the opportunity to escape, Atlas told Hercules, "I'll retrieve the apples, but one must hold up the sky in my stead." Hercules agreed and thought naively that upon accomplishment of the task Atlas would return to his punishment. Atlas had a different idea. He attempted to trick Hercules and told him "I will take the golden apples to Eurystheus and com-plete the task. I shall return to take up my duty upon completion." Hercules, famed for his brawn ra-ther than his intellect, achieved a rare moment of wit and entreated with Atlas, "Please hold the sky for a moment while I adjust myself to fully prepare for the weight of this labor." Atlas dropped the ap-ples, retook the sky from Hercules, and as the demigod rolled away from him, only then did Atlas understand the folly of his actions. Hercules said, "I give you my thanks, great Titan!," and off he went with the golden apples on his journey back to Eurystheus while Atlas, the fool, hurled obsceni-ties at his back.



Artist unknown, French
Bacchante and Faun-Child, 18th c.
Bronze
171 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.545

A characteristic of the Renaissance was drawing on the messages of the old Greek myths that had been left in favor of the stories of the Catholic Church. A medal such as this could have been made for someone who understood and represented that brute strength didn't always ensure victory. Hercules was known as the strongest man alive, but when confronted with a task he couldn't beat with his fists, he used his intellect, something hidden behind his veil of brawn.

Daniel Eidman, History, 2021

The New God of Ecstasy and Horror

My herd of cattle began to act as if possessed, like somehow the surrounding mountains were speaking to them. They took off in an easterly direction, and I followed them across Asopus's waters and the foothills of Cithaeron. I soon came to a glade, with a ravine bound by snow-topped cliffs, and I forgot my cattle. For all around me were women asleep under pine trees and sprawled in piles of oak leaves. With loosely tousled hair, their necks adorned with snakes and bodies clothed in fawn skins, the women offered their white milk from large and swollen breasts to young deer and wild wolf cubs. As I watched, they awakened, and their leader began to restore an ivy crown beside her; the other women enthusiastically started to sing intoxicating bacchic antiphonies with clear voices. One woman tapped her ivy-covered staff, which had a pine cone on top, against a stump and was rewarded with lively jets of milk, sweet streams of honey, and a desired draught of wine. I prayed to whatever god controlled them, for without



Artist unknown
Chimera, n.d.
Bronze
150 x 106.5 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.628

wine, I would have no other earthly pleasure and would surely soon sink into depression. Under a large tree, a beautiful young woman dangled a bunch of grapes above a goatfooted child. I felt a great peace enveloping me; I was no longer fearful. I somehow knew the child was related to the woman. I felt as if I had dived into an abyss of pleasurable frenzy. I walked towards the woman with the grapes, desiring to join her, and I started to undress as she handed me a cup of milk and placed a wreath on my head. Suddenly my brother crashed through the bushes, encroaching on our private sanctity. But in my mind, I saw him as a li-on, a great beast; and, feeling more powerful than any mortal, I grabbed the lion's head and tore it asunder.

Jacqueline Isero, History of Public Policy, 2021

The Beast Lives

The crunch of dirt and the rustle of leaves mingled with the thudding of her blood in her ears as she raced through the trees. She was barely aware of the thin branches snagging her clothes or cutting her face as she ran as fast as her legs could carry her. Fear and adrenaline fueled her every step. She was confused about where she was or how she got there, all she knew was that she had to get as far away from the creature. At first, she thought there had to be more than one animal, but as shock melted into horror, she realized it was a single frightening beast with the body and head of a lion and a second head, that of a goat protruding out its back. Panicked, she backed away in terror. The creature sent out a great blast of



Master IO.F.F. (b. Italy, active 1468–1484) Horatius Cocles Defending the Bridge, second half 15th c. Bronze 63 x 60 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.467

fire in response to her movements. Beads of sweat formed on her brow as the heat of the beast's fiery breath enveloped her, and she ran.

The stabbing pain in her side threatened to overwhelm her as she panted for breath and searched wildly from side to side. Suddenly, she spilled out of the woods and stumbled to the ground, colliding with an old whitehaired man. Getting back on her feet, she saw a small bronze engraving on the brick wall behind the old man, identical to the beast she had just escaped. She asked the white-haired man about the engraving of the creature, but he just looked at her bewildered, he didn't understand her. She was speaking English; he only spoke Greek. She turned back to look at the plaque when suddenly, a monstrous shadow darkened the image she had found. The hairs on the back of her neck stood on end. She turned slowly on the spot to find the old man could not help her. She stared into the eyes of the living replica of the engraving behind her.

Aubrey Cox, History, 2020

The Valor of War

He stared in wonder at the plaque, its central figure fighting for his city's freedom, and remembered his experiences on the battlefield in Naples. A companion approached, asking if he knew the story of Publius Horatius Cocles. As he shook his head, the friend began the tale of woe: "Publius Horatius Cocles was a common soldier in Rome's battle against King Lars Porsena in 509. While patrolling, Porsena's army attacked the remaining bridge leading to Rome. Caught off guard, many of the men in Horatius's



Artist unknown, Italian
Horsemen Fighting, early 16th c.
Bronze
63 x 100 mm
Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance
Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.449

company began to flee. But not him. Alone he advanced onto the bridge to face the enemy. Understanding the importance of the bridge as a stronghold for the city, Horatius called to his generals to cut the bridge - even though he remained on it so that the ene-my could not cross. As the bridge tumbled, Horatius leapt into the river in full armor, praying to the river god Tibernus for protection. Under heavy fire he swam to shore and was hailed a hero. Horatius's determination and resolve to save his city is the bar to which we are asked to live up to." The soldier nodded in admiration, hoping that if the day came, he too would have the courage to risk his life for the safety of his country. As they continued down the hall toward the King for their next mili-tary assignment, the memory of Roman valor weighed heavily in their hearts and minds.

Donna Blockhus, Classics, 2020

My dear Brother, Giovanni,

By the grace of God, I hope this letter finds you well. I am sure that my silence over the past few months has given you and the rest of the family suspicion over my death. Do not fear for I am alive yet injured both in body and heart. I am currently in Milan, but I hope that I will be well enough soon to travel back to Venice to join you and the rest of the family. As I am sure you have heard by now, the Venetian forces under d'Alviano suffered a crushing defeat by the French king and his troops at Agnadello. It was a glorious battle, and would you believe it, your own brother rode with the cavalry. I can proudly say that I did our family great

honor and prestige by charging into the fray with Captain d'Alviano. I had cut down many Frenchmen before suffering an injury while falling from my horse. My entire life, I had dreamed of serving with the cavalry, and it was that day God had blessed me with the opportunity. Yet, by God's will, we did not achieve victory. After the battle, I was taken prisoner along with the other riders. Still, some of us, including myself, were able to escape. I am writing you this letter from Milan, having rested here, for the time being, recovering from a mild sickness brought on by a festering wound. Although the infection could worsen, I do not fear death for God's protection will see me through. I hope that you are well and finding work. If you are short of work, might I recommend a commission of the battle your own brother participated in? I believe some rich Frenchman would pay a hefty sum for that! Perhaps you can make it a medal or something similar, but you are the artist, so I will leave the ideas to you. With the fate of the Republic hanging in the balance, we will be in desperate need of funds.

Your Brother, Ludovico

Mark Maldonaldo, History, 2020





Giovanni Boldù (b. Italy, active ca. 1454–before 1477) Caracalla, Roman Emperor, 1466 Bronze 89 mm Sigmund Morgenroth Collection of Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes, 1964.247

Triple Sided Coin

io son fine

Says the putto, so plump with youth and simmering spirit

Seemingly gluttonous resting on the hard core of man

And yet, we must think well of this creature How kind of him to deliver man's soul to the heavens

Such a level of cognitive dissonance makes one weep

I am a painter

Why am I the only one who believes it so?
My life is set out before me
My soul is fiery, with flames like brushstrokes
And yet, there rests my life's work
So hard, so cold, so bronze
Such a level of cognitive dissonance makes
one weep

The young boy, so fresh and so innocent Soon his sweet crown of laurels Shall be replaced with a caracalla And his heart will harden into that of a warrior's A cruel and ruthless emperor Such a level of cognitive dissonance makes

Jillian Osheroff, Sociology, 2020

one weep

Lucius Septimius Bassianus

Duality

"... and so Antonius Pius Augustus married Fulvia Plautilla, against his will. It seems he never truly forgave his family for stripping love's freedom away from him. A spirit of enmity followed him thereaf-ter, wreaking havoc wherever he went."

Hands beaded with sweat, Giovanni Boldù closed the book. He set it on the grand, oak table and pondered solemnly before stepping outside the stuffy, Gothic library. The sun's radiance greet-ed him as he stepped out onto the streets of Venice in 1466, teeming with lively Venetians out and about.

"What a stark contrast to that tragic life, this one scene is," thought Boldù as he embraced the panoramic view of his city.

A troop of mercenaries marching down the street and harassing merchants and shoppers alike broke Boldù's daze. He scuttled away, eager to avoid them.

"How ironic that such a beautiful city, green with life, is also afflicted with the despot's iron-fisted rule," Boldù remarked sadly. Yet, not a second after the last word left his mouth, his face lit up. "I know just what to do."

Guazzalotti stared intently before exclaiming, "It's different from what you've usually done. The crying baby and the skull. Io Son Fine?"

"Man's duality," Boldù pronounced while waving his chisel, "The most innocent of us can also house the evilest spirits. The most exteriorly innocent say 'I am fine', yet may also suffer silently and helplessly from the cruelest of fates."

"Rumors have it that the Università degli Studi di Padova is planning on hosting a night to display works by Pisanello and Bertoldo. Perhaps, if you find a patron, then your work also..." Guaz-zalotti's voice trailed off.

"What will you call it?" inquired Guazzalotti

The midday light filtered through the window sill, illuminating half of Boldù's face.

"Caracalla, Roman Emperor."

Junho Jeon, History, 2021

Gods, Glory & Spirituality is organized by the Art, Design & Architecture Museum in collaboration with William Thompson, Assistant Professor of History at Northwest University, and his students from Historical Fiction (UCSB, Spring 2020), and is curated by Sophia Quach McCabe, Academic Coordinator.

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Gods, Glory & Spirituality: Audio