Music Iconography: What is it all about? Some remarks and considerations with a selected Bibliography[1]

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I have to tell you I enjoy being on a construction site.
Tino Faussone in Primo Levi, *La chiave a stella*[2]

A glance at the output of music iconography research reveals an obvious topical and methodological plurality that can easily be misunderstood as a kind of eclecticism.[3] That is why music iconography research still appears – metaphorically speaking – more like a construction site than a garden in the style of André Le Nôtre. The topical and methodological plurality of music iconography is, however, the result of the development of music iconography as a research field and its specific dependence on an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary

[1] The following considerations - originally presented during the 18th edition of the ANPPOM annual congress, in Salvador (Bahia - Brazil) - September 2008 - are partly based on further exploring and summarizing ideas that I have discussed within my papers "Quo vadis music iconography? The Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale as a case study", in: *Fontes Artis Musicae*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2007), 440-452, "Mapping music iconography", in: *Proceedings of the International Conference of IAML/IAMIC/IMS, Göteborg 2006*. Ed. Chris Walton (forthcoming), and "The Jester of Musicology or The Place and Function of Music Iconography in Institutions of Higher Education", keynote lecture, presented at the international conference *Thinking Music in Art: New Directions in Music Iconography*, University of Otago, New Zealand, 26 – 28 June 2008.

[2] Primo Levi, *La chiave a stella*. Turin: Einaudi, 1978 (English translation by the author).

[3] The chronologically arranged list of studies at the end of this paper, including research on dance and ethnomusicological topics reflects the plurality of topical and methodological aspects of music iconography research.

discourse to generate useful scholarly knowledge.[4] It is noteworthy that music iconography research and cataloguing projects strongly depend on a successful discourse with other disciplines. The interdisciplinary focus in music iconography is not a mere fashion or some promotional hype utilized by academic institutions to market their programs, but rather, a focus essential to an adequate analysis of visual sources.

Already in the 1970s Emanuel Winternitz, one of the founding fathers of music iconography, emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of scholarly research in music iconography, and even went so far as to hope that music iconography would help "to free musicology from that isolation into which so many specialized branches of research have fallen in our overspecializing times."[5] This hope has not materialized within the last four decades. Musicology, on the one hand, is still shaped by being extremely specialized, strongly supported by "the reward system", as James Anderson Winn has pointed out, "by which universities" still "hire, promote, and remunerate their faculties."[6] This tendency was enforced by the cultural shift with its dramatic

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[4] To simplify matters, the term "interdisciplinarity" will also be applied for marking the shared perspectives of trandisciplinarity and multidisciplinartiy. It is, however, important to emphasize that both transdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity are only related to but not congruent with the concept of interdisciplinarity. For further information on this topic see, for instance: *Practicing Interdisciplinarity*. Ed. Peter Weingart and Nice Stehr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, *Transdisciplinarity: Joint problem solving among science, technology, and society*. Ed. Julie Thompson Klein et al. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2000, William H. Newell, "A Theory of Interdisciplinary Studies", in: *Issues in Integrative Studies* 19 (2001), 1-25, and *Transdisziplinarität: Bestandesaufnahme und Perspektiven. Beiträge zur THESIS-Arbeitstagung im Oktober 2003 in Göttingen*. Ed. Frank Brand et al. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2004.

[5] Emanuel Winternitz, "The Iconology of Music: Potential and Pitfalls". In: *Perspectives in Musicology*. Ed. Barry S. Brook et al. New York: Norton, 1972, 80-90 (quote, 90).

[6] See James Anderson Winn, *The Pale of Words. Reflections on the Humanities and Performance*. New Haven (CT) and London: Yale University Press, 1998, 116. Any criticism of the specialization within the humanities has also to take into consideration the conditions that have favored such a development. Specialization in the humanities has to be considered as a reaction to changes within the paradigm of science during the last third of the nineteenth century. In the course of this development the natural sciences were based primarily on "objective" methods and the notion of empirically developed "facts" began to dominate. The scientific canon of the disciplines strongly challenged the humanities with their primarily religious-metaphysical foundation as it is paradigmatically presented in the concept of classical historicism by Leopold von Ranke. It was Max Weber who definitely pulled the rug from under such a historic-philosophical concept at the beginning of the twentieth century (see, for instance, Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf" (lecture 1922), in: *Max-Weber-Gesamtausgabe*, Abt. I, Vol. 17. Ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Wolfgang Schluchter. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992, 70-111).

effect on the university within the last three decades out of which many scholars started advocating the "University of Excellence"[7] or *Exzellenzenförderung* (the promotion of excellence in academia) although both strongly buttress solipsism and fragmentation.

Music iconography, on the other hand, still experiences a kind of a feeble existence in today's academia. The reasons for this situation are manifold and do interact with each other. For instance, many scholars still fear that interdisciplinarity weakens the traditional classification of scholarship according to disciplines as it has developed since the nineteenth century and which still essentially shapes the professional identity of both the scholars and the institutional integration of the disciplines.[8] Moreover, the first attempts to extend the musicological curriculum to include music iconography along with its appropriate methodological approaches coincided with a seismic shift in the humanities which eventually resulted, as far as music research is concerned, in the still ongoing "struggle for the cultural authority to speak about music."[9] This may also explain some of the structural problems the international inventory for musical iconography, the Répertoire International

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However, the influence of natural science with its empiric perspective cannot be underestimated – Anton Springer (1825-1891, for instance, the first professor of art history at Leipzig University treated art history dependent on source study, emphasizing exact description and the development of scientific – i.e. "objective" - criteria. The affinity to favor "facts" instead of "theories" as Georg G. Iggers has pointed out "and to scientifically accept only what can be substantiated by sources" benefited specialization und philology within the humanities to such an extent that both were strongly criticized for this approach already in the nineteenth century. No less then Johann Gustav Droysen, the author of numerous eminent and influential history studies, lamented in a letter that "any garbage that is treated with a special study, (is) blazoned out with the fanfare of science" (Georg G. Iggers, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Kritik der traditionellen Geschichtsauffassung von Herder bis zur Gegenwart*. Vienna etc.: Böhlau, 1997 (3rd edition), 171 (English as The German Concept of History. Middletown (CT): Wesleyan University Press, 1968) and (Johann Gustav Droysen, *Briefwechsel*. Ed. Rudolf Hübner. Stuttgart-Berlin-Leipzig: Deutsch Verlagsanstalt, 1929, Vol. 2, 977-978).

[7] Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996, 46.

[8] However, interdisciplinarity aims to increase the capacity of traditional disciplines to cope with the problems of science and society. Interdisciplinarity does not attack the traditional disciplines but enhances the treatment of complex questions beyond the boundaries of the single disciplines and benefits from the tension created by the discourse among the different disciplines.

[9] Kevin Korsyn, "The Aging of the New Musicology", paper delivered at the International Symposium *Approaches to Music Research: between Practice and Epistemology*, Ljubljana, 8 – 9 May 2008, 16. See also Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

d'Iconographie Musicale, has experienced since its establishment in 1971, a topic I will return to shortly. Last but not least, as far as disciplines which use visual documents as auxiliary rather than primary sources are concerned, the lack of agreement about how visual sources should be acquired and used is noteworthy. The field of history provides an elucidating example of this situation. While some history scholars emphasize the benefits of cross-fertilization between the disciplines,[10] others are quite hesitant to accept the use of visual sources as evidence, arguing that art is not only formed through purposes and traditions but also to a large extent through imagination.[11] Indeed, on the one hand, visual sources are epistemological documents that often provide information that oral and written sources on paper cannot express or which have been neglected or omitted by contemporary writers. On the other hand, one always has to take into account that pictorial documents do not necessarily follow what is generally called historical truth or credibility. Especially within music iconography research scholars have to keep in mind that the visual source with musical subject matter is seldom a means of musical communication, meaning that criteria of music are most often not the main guiding principle in the process of artistic creation.[12] This is, indeed, not only the case with depictions with a predominantly symbolic, allegoric, mythological or religious narrative, as for instance, Raphael's *Parnass* fresco at the Stanza della Segnatura at the Vatican (fig. 1) and the depiction of Saint Cecilia of the *Kreuz Altar* by The Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altar (fig. 2, 3 and 4) but also with images that seemingly mirror reality (fig. 5 and 6).

The depiction of the lira da braccio with nine rather than the expected seven strings in Raphael's *Parnass*, played by Apollo who is sitting in the center of the fresco, is, as I have argued in another study, not the result of a true copy of existing instruments, but rather the symbolic and ideological narrative embodied in the fresco. It symbolizes the revitalized concept of

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[10] See for instance, Theodor Raab and Jonathan Brown (Eds.), "The Evidence of Art: Images and Meaning in History". *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XVII (1986), Peter Burke, *Augenzeugenschaft. Bilder als historische Quallen*. Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2003 (English as *Eyewitnessing. The Use of Images as Historical Evidence*. Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 2001), and Bernd Roeck, *Das historische Auge. Kunstwerke als Zeugen ihrer Zeit: Von der Renaissance zur Revolution*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

[11] See for instance Francis Haskall, *History and Its Images: Art and Interpretation of the Past*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

[12] See Tilman Seebass, "Prospettive dell'iconografia musicale. Considerazioni di un medievalista", in: *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, XVIII/1 (1983), 67-86, particularly 71.

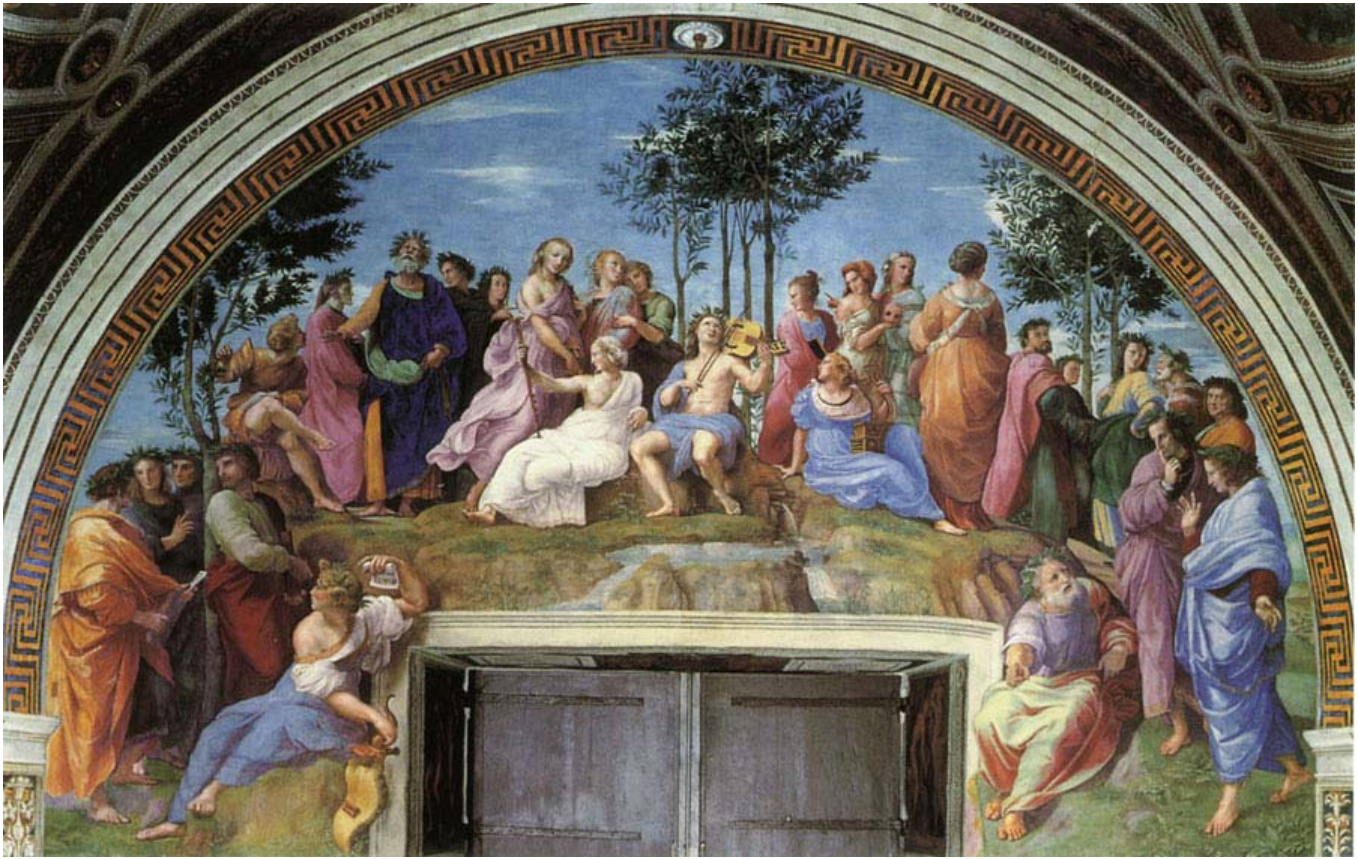

Fig. 1, Raphael (Rafaello Santi), Parnass*, 1509-1511, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican State*

Fig. 2: Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altar, Saint John the Baptist and Saint Cecilia, *Kreuz Altar, left wing, about 1490-1495, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne*

Fig. 3: Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altar, Saint John the Baptist and Saint Cecilia, *Kreuz Altar, left wing (detail), about 1490-1495, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne*

Fig. 4: Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altar, Saint Cecilia, Saint Agnes and Saint Bartholomew, *1485-1510, triptych (central panel), wood, 129 x 161 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich*

Fig. 5: Jakob Gauermann, Polsterltanz*, 1820, oil on canvas, 31.0 x 45.1 cm, Private Collection*

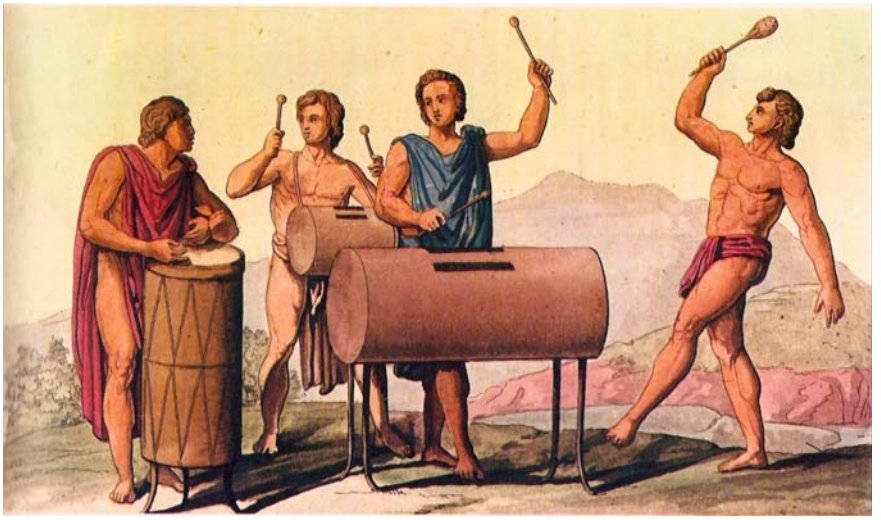

Fig. 6: Anonymous, Músicos Mexicanos*, probably 18th century, Italian, aquatint, reproduced in Fernando Benítez,* Historia de La Ciudad de México*, México D.F.: Salvat, 1984, Vol. 1, 77.*

the ancient poet-singer in the Renaissance, surrounded by the nine muses who are represented in the nine strings of the instrument.[13]

The depiction of Saint Cecilia on the left wing of the Kreuz Altar combines realistic and supernatural features. Saint Cecilia is pumping and playing a portative organ while a small angel helps to manipulate the instrument. The "realistic" impression is supported by the "individualized" presentations of the two figures (Saint John the Baptist and Saint Cecilia) as if they were "portraits" by which the artist seems to want to make the viewer forget that the depicted figures are stylized images of Saints. Yet, neither the situation nor the depiction of the musical instrument can be taken as evidence for a real musical communication. The portative organ, for instance, is depicted with a corrupted keyboard as a close glance proves (fig. 3).

Furthermore this depiction of Saint Cecilia is strikingly similar to an illustration of the same saint by the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altar preserved on the central panel of the Saint Bartholomew Altar which clearly indicates that the artist is following certain artistic patterns or traditions within the representation of Saint Cecilia (fig. 4).

Although both Jakob Gauermann's canvas *Polsterltanz* of 1820 (fig. 5) and the Italian aquatint of apparently indigenous Mexican musicians by an anonymous artist (fig. 6) intend to present a detail of everyday life, they are both highly charged with ideological narratives. While Gauermann's depiction of the traditional *Polsterltanz* (pillow dance) is ideologically and stylistically influenced by the Biedermeier concept of idealization, the Mexican musicians are the product of a European vision of the cultivated yet exotic savages whose exoticism is neutralized by shaping them as ancient Greek or Roman individuals.

Although the majority of examples used so far belong to (high) Western art, it is important to explicitly point out that for music iconography research all visual documents are valuable primary sources independent of their artistic value. Music iconography research cares about the quality and amount of information a visual object may provide, and not about the artistic value. In contrast to art history and musicology whose basic categories of research are still strongly referring to the artwork and its author, the focus of music iconography is the iconographical/iconological content of the visual source itself. However, it cannot be denied that objects of so-called high culture still

[13] Antonio Baldassarre, Die *Lira da braccio* im humanistischen Kontext Italiens, in: *Music in Art*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1-2 (1999), 5-28 (also in Chinese in *Yi shu zhong de yin yue*, vol. 1/2006).

frame the core sources within music iconography research. This concentration on Western art and objects of high-culture cannot simply be dismissed as elitism, but has historical and practical reasons. Historically, music iconography research, including its methodology, emerged in close connection to music history research during a period dominated by Western musical artworks and its methodological perspectives. In practical terms this focus was the result of easy availability of source material through museums and art collections. This availability has exerted and still wields a significant influence in maintaining the involvement of music iconography research with the analysis and interpretation of high art.

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With respect to the availability of visual sources and the increasing interest in these sources to achieve scientific knowledge, Edward Dent (1876-1957) advocated for an international inventory of iconographic sources with musical subject already in 1929.[14] His vision finally materialized in the establishment of the Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale (also known as RIdIM) in 1971[15] on the initiative of Barry S. Brook (1918-1997), Geneviève Thibault Comtesse de Chambure (1902-1975) and Harald Heckmann (*1924) and with the strong support of Emanuel Winternitz (1898-1983), Howard Mayer Brown (1930-1993) and Walter Salmen (*1926).[16] Since the late 1980s RIdIM has functioned primarily through ongoing activities of individuals in many countries doing scholarly research and cataloguing often at their own expense and with minimal institutional support. Since that period RIdIM continued to be an international project but lacked both a clear structure and a functioning Commission Mixte. Thanks to joint activities

[14] See Minutes of the Directorium Meeting of the International Musicological Society, 1929 (Archives of the International Musicological Society, Basel, Switzerland).

[15] See "Actes du Neuvième Congrès International des Bibliothèques Musicales, St. Gall, 22–28 août 1971", in: *Fontes Artis Musicae,* Vol. XIX (1972), 196–203, Barry S. Brook et al., "RIdIM: A new international venture in musical iconography", in *Notes*, Vol. 28, no. 4 (1972), 652–663, Victor Ravizza, "Zu einem internationalen Repertorium der Musikikonographie", in: *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 44, no. 1 (1972), 101–108; Antonio Baldassarre, "Looking back and forward". In: *RIdIM Newsletter*, 1 (2006), 2-4; and Antonio Baldassarre, "Quo vadis music iconography?" (see footnote 1), 441-443.

[16] Further information about the establishment of RIdIM as an international venture is provided in my editorials to the *RIdIM Newsletters* nos. 1-3 (2006-2008).

of the three sponsoring societies – the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centers (IAML), the International Musicological Society (IMS) and the International Committee of Musical Instrument Museums and Collections (CIMCIM) of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) – it was possible to re-establish stable and transparent structures which finally resulted in the appointment of a new Commission Mixte in 2005.

In contrast to the other so-called "R-Projects" – i.e. the Répertoire International des Source Musicales (RISM), the Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) and the Répertoire International de la Presse Musicale (RIPM) – RIdIM was, however, destined not only for functioning as an inventory project but also for promoting research in music iconography. This research depends significantly on the availability of source material for which the RIdIM database and the establishment of RIdIM working groups and national centers are the most effective tools.

The development of the RIdIM database for cataloguing music-related objects was one of the most challenging projects that the Commission Mixte approached since 2005. The success of having been able to launch the first test version of this database in March 2008 benefited from the imperturbable belief in its necessity by the Commission Mixte, despite the extensive time and energy required to achieve this goal, and from the knowledge and expertise on many database aspects, provided by the four advisory members of the Commission Mixte.[17]

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Although, as mentioned, plurality is a characteristic feature of the actual situation of music iconography research, one can – theoretically – distinguish two different main approaches. The "traditional" branch focuses primarily on the analysis and interpretation of organological aspects and historical music performance practices, including questions concerning the identification of visible musical scores and depicted people. Two of the first examples representing this approach are Martin Gerbert's (1720-1793) *De cantu et musica sacra a prima ecclesiae aetate usque ad praesens tempus* of 1774 in which he used visual sources in addition to written documents to

[17] The RIdIM database can be accessed via the RIdIM website at "www.ridim.org". At the moment it is open to cataloguers only. Public access is scheduled for 2009.

reconstruct musical performance practices of the Middle Ages,[18] and the work of Guillaume André Villoteau (1759-1839) who seems to have been the first scholar to apply visual sources within a music ethnographical study focusing on historic and contemporary musical practices in Greece and Egypt.[19]

The other branch is chiefly concerned about studying and interpreting music iconographical sources from a socio-cultural point of view, based on achievements of Aby Warburg (Abraham Moritz Warburg) (1866-1929) and his school that were further developed by Fritz Saxl (1890-1948), Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968) and Edgar Wind (1900-1971),[20] and as far as music iconography in particular is concerned by Emanuel Winternitz (1898-1983), Howard Mayer Brown (1930-1993) and Richard D. Leppert.[21] Of special influence were the studies by Erwin Panofsky insofar as he introduced an elaborated meanwhile, however, highly criticized methodological perspective for research in iconography, particularly with his *Studies in Iconology* published in 1939.[22]

These two perspectives do not exclude each other but rather often merge in scholarly practice. An interesting example is found in a close reading of the canvas, *The Morse and Cator Family* by Johann Zoffany (fig. 7).

The painting depicts the two families gathered for a musical performance. Robert Morse is playing the cello; his sisters Anne Francis and Sarah are seated at the harpsichord and Sarah's husband, William Cator,

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[18] Martin Gerbert, *De cantu et musica sacra a prima ecclesiae aetate usque ad praesens tempus*, Monasterium Sancti Blasii 1774. Reprint ed. Othmar Wessely. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968.

[19] Guillaume André Villoteau, *De l'État actuel de l'art musical en Égypte, ou Relation historique et descriptive des recherches et observations faites sur la musique en ce pays*. Paris: Impr. impériale, 1812, and *Description historique, technique et littéraire des instruments de musique des Orientaux*. Paris: Impr. impériale, 1813. See also Guillaume André Villoteau, *Dissertation sur les diverses espèces d'instrumens de musique que l'on remarque parmi les sculptures que décorent les antiques monumens de l'Égypte, et sur les noms que leur donnèrent en leur langue propre les premiers peuples de ce pays*. Paris: Impr. de C.L.F. Panckoucke, 1822.

[20] See for instance Fritz Saxl, "A Battle Scene without a Hero", in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* III (1939/40), 70-87, and Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. London: Faber and Faber, 1968 (new and enlarged edition). For literature concerning Panofsky see appendix.

[21] See appendix.

[22] Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1939. A discussion about Panofsky's methodology and the criticism is provided in Antonio Baldassarre, "Mapping music iconography" (see footnote 1).

stands on the right. Zoffany's painting depicts a typical eighteenth century musical gathering as he has provided in a very similar way in his painting *George, 3rd Earl Cowper, with the Family of Charles Gore* in ca. 1775 (fig. 8).

Fig. 7: Johann Zoffany, The Morse and Cator Family, *ca. 1783/84, 110.2 x 100.1 cm, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum*

Fig. 8: Johann Zoffany, George, 3rd Earl Cowper, with the Family of Charles Gore, *ca. 1775, oil on canvas, 78.7.x 97.8 cm, Private Collection*

In this respect the portrait of the Morse and Cator Family offers interesting insights into the musical performance practices of eighteenth century English culture. In addition, it provides valuable information concerning the playing and construction of the depicted instruments.

Fig. 9: Johann Zoffany, Colonel Blair with his family and an Indian Ayah, *1810, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 134.6 cm, The Tate Gallery, London*

However, the canvas includes another important but hidden narrative that can only be discovered from a cultural point of view. The omnipresence of conventional eighteenth century English culture mirrored in the fine costumes and elegant interior suppresses the information that this canvas shows the families in their home in Calcutta, India. In this respect the canvas reveals, as Richard D. Leppert has convincingly argued,[23] the power of English colonialists in eighteenth century India. Zoffany gave this idea even more explicit expression in his portrait of *Colonel Blair with his family* of 1810 by depicting an Indian servant on the right side (fig. 9).

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Music iconography research and RIdIM make significant contributions to other research fields. They not only provide source material but also

[23] See Richard D. Leppert, "Music, domestic life, and cultural chauvinism: images of British subjects at home in India", In: *Music and Society: the politics of composition, and representation.* Ed. Richard D. Leppert and Susan McClary. Cambridge and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, 63-104.

support the interpretation and understanding of source material from an interdisciplinary point of view. The benefit of such interdisciplinary enterprises ranges from the identification of portrayed people, depicted music or musical scenes and of musical instruments (including their symbolism) to the understanding of other specific particularities embodied in images that can only be understood and appreciated with musical knowledge. A full appreciation of the narrative of Hans Holbein the Younger's painting *The Ambassadors*, for instance, depends to a significant extent on musical knowledge (fig. 10).

Holbein's canvas is a double-portrait of Jean de Dinteville (left), who became French ambassador to the English court of Henry VIII in 1533, and Georges de Selves (right), bishop of Lavaur, and depicts the visit of the

Fig. 10: Hans Holbein The Younger, The Ambassadors, *1533, oil on wood, 206.0 x. 209.0 cm, National Gallery, London*

Fig. 11: Hans Holbein The Younger, The Ambassadors *(detail), 1533, oil on wood, 206.0 x 209.0 cm, National Gallery, London*

bishop in London during a politically crucial situation. The center of the painting is fully occupied by a shelf and objects with highly symbolic value and a skull. The broken sixth string of the depicted lute and the flute case fit into the overall narrative of Holbein's painting as does the songbook by combining two songs of the second edition of Johann Walther's *Geistliches Gesangbuch* (Worms, Peter Schöffer, 1525) that do not, however, appear on the opposite pages as in Holbein's depiction (fig. 11).[24]

Holbein combines Walther's song "Komm heiliger geyste" after Martin Luther's translation of "Veni sancte spiritus" and the beginning of Luther's reduced version of The Ten Commandments "Mensch wiltu leben seliglich". The broken string, the flute case and the songs, however, support the painting's narrative as a *vanitas* or *memento mori* depiction, referring to the historical event of Henry VIII's divorce that caused a huge political crisis all over Europe.[25]

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[24] Markus Jenny, "Ein frühes Zeugnis für die kirchenverbindliche Bedeutung des evangelischen Kirchenliedes", in: *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie*, VIII (1963), 123-128; and Mary Rasmussen, "The case of the flutes in Holbein's 'The ambassadors'", in: *Early Music*, XXIII/1 (1995), 115-123.

[25] For further information on the analysis and interpretation of Holbein's *Ambassador* see, for instance: Mary Hervey, *Holbein's Ambassadors: The Picture and the Men*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1900, John Rowlands, *Holbein: The Paintings of Hans Holbein the Younger*. Boston: David R. Godine, 1985, Peter Cornelius Claussen, "Der doppelte Boden unter Holbeins Gesandten", in: *Hülle und Fülle. Festschrift für Tilmann Buddensieg*. Ed. Andreas Beyer et al. Alfter: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1993, 177-202, Susan Foister, Roy Ashok and Martin Wyld, *Making and Meaning: Holbein's Ambassadors*. London: National Gallery Publications, 1997, Etty Dekker and Kristen Lippincott, "The Scientific Instruments in Holbein's Ambassadors", in: *Journal of the Warburg*

Another interesting example of the benefits of cross-fertilization is the famous portrait of Louis XIV, the Sun King, painted by Hyacinthe Rigaud (fig. 12) which initially may not even appear to be concerned with music.

Fig. 12: Hyacinthe Rigaud, Louis XIV, *(detail), 1701, Oil on canvas, 279 x 190 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris*

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and Courtauld Institutes 62 (1999), 93-125, Jeanette Zwingenberger, *The Shadow of Death in the Work of Hans Holbein the Younger*. London: Parkstone Press, 1999, Giles Hudson, "The Vanity of the Sciences", in: *Annals of Science* 60, 2 (2003), 201–205, and John North, *"The Ambassador" Secret: Holbein and the World of the Renaissance*. London: Phoenix, 2004.

It is well known that Louis XIV was very aware of the remarkable power of the arts concerning both his political agenda and his political image as evidenced by many descriptions in his Memoirs and the almost unrestrained promotion of the arts as the most effective means of the king's self-portrayal.[26] The role the arts played within the construction of the political image of the Sun King can hardly be overestimated, as Peter Burke has explored in his elucidating study.[27]

Generally, portraits of rulers have a very explicit narrative: to perform power, fame and prestige. Thus it is not surprising that these kind of portraits follow more or less normative rules. Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo (1538-1600) demanded in *Trattato dell'arte della Pittura* (1584)[28] that portraits should display kings and princes with an awe-inspiring habitus and not primarily care about the true appearance of the portrayed person.[29]

Louis XIV liked Rigaud's portrait very much and commissioned numerous copies.[30] Although at first glance, the portrait fits perfectly into the normative rules of a traditional state-portrait, the depiction's narrative is extremely bizarre. Following the traditional norms its pictorial allusions to Renaissance traditions are quite unremarkable. The depictions of a classical pillar and an allegorical Justice figure on the pillar's pedestal as well as of a red velvet curtain and the royal garment are features connecting this particular portrait to the tradition of state-portrait painting since the Renaissance. The king himself is, however, depicted simultaneously in a natural and an idealized manner. The upper part of the portrait, particularly the face, presents the king as an aging individual[31] a depiction most uncommon for representative

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[26] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*. Ed as *Mémoires du Louis XIV* by Charles Dreyss, 2 Vols. Paris: Didier & Cie, 1860 and as *Louis XIV, Mémoires* by Jean Longnon, Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1927, Reprint Paris: Tallandier, 2001.

[27] Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV*. New Haven (CT): Yale University Press, 1992.

[28] The *Trattato dell'arte della Pittura* is Lomazzo's chief work. It appeared in seven volumes in Milan in 1584. Its enormous success finds evidence in English and French translations that were published soon after the Italian edition.

[29] See Enrico Castelnuovo, "Il significato del ritratto pittorico nella società". In: *Storia d'Italia Einaudi*, vol. V/2. Torino: Einaudi, 1973, 1033-1094.

[30] See Werner Willi Ekkehard Mai, *"Le Portrait du roi", Staatsporträt und Kunsttheorie in der Epoche Ludwigs XIV.* PhD dissertation, Universität Bonn, 1975.

[31] Another striking example depicting Louis XIV as an aging individual is the famous portrait bust by Antoine Benoist (1706, wax and other materials, Château de Versailles).

portraits at that time and contradictory to the aforementioned requirement of Lomazzo.

As Ragnhild Marie Hatton has pointed out one can even detect the tired eyes and the sunken cheeks, most probably caused by the king's recent, and well documented, dental surgery when having a close look at the canvas.[32]

In contrast, the king's lower part, especially the elegant legs and their particular position allude to the period when Louis used to appear on stage as a dancer,[33] an activity which he had, however, abandoned already thirty years before the portrait was painted. A comparison with the famous drawing of the costume sketch depicting the king dancing in the role of Apollo in *Ballet royal de la nuit* of 1653 clarifies this interpretation (fig. 13-15).

Although Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV represents the explicit narrative of state-portraits, its true value can only be appreciated when analyzing it with respect to its relations with musical practice matters, the socio-cultural space and the communication process activated by the painting's aesthetic and symbolic means.[34]

With respect to state-portraits, a glaring absence or omission is that of any laughter unless the portrayed person wishes to be explicitly presented as a tribune of the people. Laughing was – and still seems to be – incompatible with the idea of political power. With respect to the pictorial representation of Louis XIV, a striking example is the rejection of an equestrian sculpture of the Sun King by Gianlorenzo Bernini because of an unbecoming smile.[35]

It is striking that portraits of musicians and composers often closely duplicate the described narrative of state-portraits as the following four illustrations reveal (fig. 16-19).

The figures play with stylizations known from portraits of rulers. When laughing is depicted in portraits of musicians, the narrative is shifted away

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[32] Ragnhild Marie Hatton, *Louis XIV and his World*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1972, 101.
[33] Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France* (1953). Harmondsworth (N.Y.): Penguin Books, 1980 (4th edition), 401.
[34] Thus, it is surely no coincidence that more then a century later, Napoléon Bonaparte, then Emperor of France, was depicted by Jacques-Louis David in a manner alluding to Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV. See Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, oil on canvas, 203.9 x 125.1 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection.
[35] Rudolf Wittkower: "Vicissitudes of a Dynastic Monument" (1961), in: Rudolf Wittkower: *Studies in the Italian Baroque*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1975, 83-102.

Fig. 13: Louis as Apollo, *anonymous costume sketch for the performance of* Ballet royal de la nuit *(Paris 1654), Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris*

Fig. 14: Louis as Apollo *(detail), anonymous costume sketch for the performance of Lully's* Ballet royal de la nuit *(Paris 1654), Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris*

Fig. 15: Hyacinthe Rigaud, Louis XIV, *(detail), 1701, Oil on canvas, 279 x 190 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris*

from presenting a musician or composer as a person involved in serious activities as I have discussed in my forthcoming paper *Mapping music iconography*.[36]

[36] See Antonio Baldassarre, "Mapping Music Iconography" (see footnote 1). Elucidating insights about the methodology concerning portraits of musicians are provided by Alan Davison, Martin Wehnert, and Martine Clouzot (see appendix) as well as in *The image of the individual: portraits in the Renaissance*. Ed. Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson. London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, 1998.

Fig. 16: Leonardo da Vinci, Portrait of a Musician, *1490, oil on panel, 43 x 31 cm, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan*

Fig. 17: Attributed to Antonio Domenico Gabbiani, Musician with a lute, *ca. 1640-1700, Museo dell'Academia, Florence*

Fig. 18: Joseph Willibrod Mähler, Ludwig van Beethoven, *1804-05, Oil on canvas, Historisches Museum – Beethoven Pasqualatihaus, Vienna*

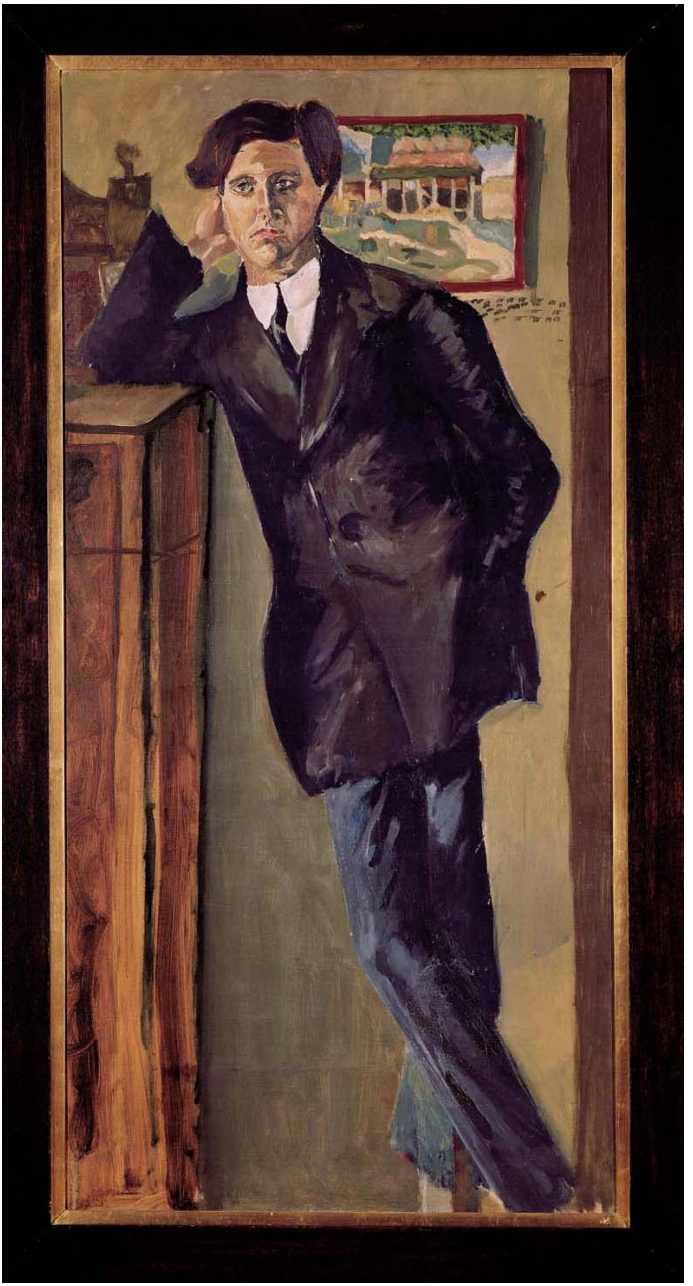

Fig. 19: Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, *1910, Oil on canvas, 175,5 x 85 cm, Museen der Stadt Wien, Vienna*

* * *

The considerations outlined up to this point prove that visual documents have a significant value in understanding not only the past but also cultural practices in general. They should be appreciated as written sources and treated with the same attention and caution. As it cannot be taken for granted that written sources are in any case faithful records, visual sources do not, as mentioned, necessarily follow principles of historical truth or credibility. Ambiguity is embodied in any epistemological document, regardless of its physical nature. The fact that we often forget to question what we see is a typical symptom of our time, caused by what Alan Trachtenberg calls the "idea of photo camera", which also significantly shapes our perception of the past. Since "the idea of camera has so implanted itself that our very imagination of the past takes the snapshot as its notion of adequacy, the equivalent of *having been there*."[37] Yet, even documents with a twisted, questionable or false nature are anything else then useless from a scholarly point of view.[38] For they can provide interesting information about the past and social and cultural practices, as I have discussed above with respect to Raphael's *Parnass* fresco and Zoffany's *The Morse and Cator Family*, for instance.

The value of visual documents as important source material is unfortunately not mirrored in the role and function music iconography plays in institutions of higher education today, particularly in the context of musicology. With the exception of *Musical Iconography*: *the manual for cataloguing musical subjects in Western art before 1800* by Howard Mayer Brown and Joan Lascelle of 1972,[39] major textbooks dealing with

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[37] Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs", in: *Representations* 9 (1985), 1-32 (quote 1). This critique has been further considered and developed by Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes and Michael J. Shapiro. See for instance Susan Sontag, *On photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977, and *Regarding the pain of others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003, Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire: note sur la photographie*. Paris: Gallimard, 1980 (English as *Camera lucida: reflections on photography*. Transl. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), and Michael J. Shapiro, *The politics of representation: writing practices in biography, photography, and policy analysis*. Madison (WI): University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.

[38] It is well known that retouching of photographs, for instance, is a common practice in popular journals and magazines. It was also regularly used in a political context to alter the pictorial representation of leading figures in culture and economy.

[39] Howard Mayer Brown and Joan Lascelle, *Musical Iconography: A Manual for Cataloguing Musical Subjects in Western Art Before 1800.* Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1972.

musicology or music history have generally little or no substantial references to topical and methodological issues of music iconography. Topical plurality and methodological eclecticism are still suspected of promoting relativism although both aspects are quite characteristic for musicology and many other well-established disciplines of the humanities.[40]

The neglect of music iconography research is in addition quite surprising when taking into consideration that pictures are often used in classrooms or in books on musical topics. Nevertheless, to lament about this status is to overlook an unexpected opportunity. I would argue that the almost basic neglect of music iconography in the academic curriculum can be considered as an advantage for music iconography research in general, especially when taking into consideration that any institutionalization embodies the danger of neutralizing and domesticating innovations as, for instance, *New Musicology* had to learn the hard way.[41] In addition, as long as the contemporary university is mostly resistant to interdisciplinary research and reacts with anxiety or authoritarian positions[42] regarding the shift the humanities experienced within the last three decades, music iconography research is better off performing the role of a critical observer. On the basis of its inherit interdisciplinary and topical pluralism, music iconography seems to be predestined to adduce

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[40] Eliane Sisman, "President's Message to the AMS", in: *American Musicological Society Newsletter*, August 2005, 5.

[41] See, for instance, Ian Biddle, "On the radical in musicology", in: *Radical Musicology*, Vol. 1, 2006 (http://www.radical-musicology.org.uk/2006/Biddle.htm) (15 April 2008); Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music*, and "The Aging of the New Musicology" (both see footnote 9).

[42] See, for instance, Eliane Sisman, "President's Message to the AMS" (see footnote 40), 5; Ludwig Finscher, "'Diversi diversa orant'. Bemerkungen zur Lage der deutschen Musikwissenschaft", in: *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2000), 9-17, and Laurenz Lütteken, "Vorwort" and "'Und was ist denn Musik?' Von der Notwendigkeit einer marginalen Wissenschaft", in: *Musikwissenschaft. Eine Positionsbestimmung*. Ed. Laurenz Lütteken. Kassel etc.: Bärenreiter, 2007, 40-66. The entire current discussion shows many similarities with the intellectual dispute at the beginning of the twentieth century that arose from the need of the bourgeoisie for new patterns of orientation. Just as at that time, today historicism is experiencing a significant crisis, convincingly analyzed by Ernst Troeltsch in "Die Krise des Historismus" (in: *Die Neue Rundschau* 33 (1922), Vol. 1, pp. 572-590) as far as the early twentieth century discourse is concerned. In contrast, Jean-François Lyotard has pointed out the close connection between the Modern and Postmodern discourse on pluralism and relativism of values (Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir*. Paris: Minuit, 1979; English as *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Transl. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, with a foreword by Fredric Jameson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

evidence that speaking about music can only benefit from diversity, continuous examination of viewpoints, and critical thinking, by applying a concept from psychology and education science: the "tolerance of ambiguity".[43] This concept incorporates the willingness to accept ambiguous situations not as a threat but as a chance to understand differences and diversity and to reflect upon given situations. Unfortunately, resistance to ambiguity in the form of non-productive struggles for dominance of one or another single methodological perspective threatens to totally undermine its newly emerging success. "Tolerance of ambiguity" is especially well suited to the particular aims of the humanities, i.e. to understand the human being, the relationship among human beings and their relationship to the environment, as performed in state, society, and culture and expressed in language, myth, religion, arts, philosophy, and science,[44] and needs to be vigorously promoted within music iconographic studies.

APPENDIX[45]

Edward BUHLE, *Die musikalischen Instrumente in den Miniaturen des frühen Mittelalters*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1903 (Reprint Walluf: Sändig, 1972).

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[43] See for example, Adrian Furnham and Tracy Ribchester. "Tolerance of Ambiguity: A review of the concept, its measurement and applications", in: *Current Psychology*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1995), 179-199 (1995), Michael J. Kirton, *Adaption-Innovation. In the Context of Diversity and Change*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003, and David J. Wilkinson, *The Ambiguity Advantage: What great leaders are great at*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

[44] See Wilhelm Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*. Leipzig: Dunker, 1883; and *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*. Berlin: s.n., 1910. English as *Introduction to the human sciences*. Ed., with an introduction by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 1989.

[45] For further bibliographic information see Frederick Crane, *A Bibliography of the Iconography of Music*. New York: The Research Center for Musical Iconography, Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 1971, Henri van der WAAL, *A preliminary list of iconographic literature in the field of music compiled from the files of ICONCLASS*, Leiden, 1971 (published at: http://web.gc.cuny.edu/rcmi/RCMIpublications.htm), and the bibliographies published in *Imago Musicae* (International Yearbook of Musical Iconography, published under the auspices of the Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale), Kassel etc., 1984ff., and in *Musique - Images - Instruments. Revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale*, Paris 1995ff.

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