

Reliquaries analysis

Business



Reliquaries are the containers and stores, which are used to display the relics.

Because of the high value bestowed to the relics, they were stored in vessels or reliquaries, which had gold cover, ivory, gems, silver, and enamel. These valuable objects were a great form of artistic production across Europe throughout the middle ages. The reliquaries could take the form of caskets or would take more complex containers with the form of body parts, which mimicked the relics, which it enshrined (Chaganti 70-79). The cover of the reliquaries had narrative scenes of the life of the saints which in contained inside. There were also reliquaries, which had the fashion of full body statues.

The reliquaries were put on the altar and carried in processions. This highly decorated works of art made an indelible impression of the faithful (Pankey 5-33). Christian beliefs in power of relics, the remains of the holy persons or the objects the holy people used. This belief is as old as Christianity itself. Faith in Christianity is connected to the relics. For example, the New Testament shows the power of healing which the objects had, when they were touched by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

The objects or the body of the saints acts as the link between men and God and acts as spiritual link between life and death. The saints are used as the advocates of human kind in heaven. The relics, which were more holy, were associated with Jesus and Mary. This mostly happened due to belief of the resurrection of Jesus Christ into heaven and because of the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven (Hastings 658-666). The most common

relics have a relation with the local saints and the apostles' who performed miracles all over Europe. All the relics had the privilege and honor upon the possessor.

The cathedral and the monasteries sought to hold and have the most prestigious relics. During the middle ages, Christians expressed and strengthened their faith through the use of the public rituals, for example, the celebration of the Eucharist and individual devotions, which were, conducted in a private chapel. People sought to deepen their faith through meditation, and prayers following guidelines from a prayer book. The images used helped to make the objects tangible in the spiritual endeavors. In reflecting the wealth and rank of individuals, the objects were produced in every medium.

They ranged from vellum to gold or ivory to clay. The fervor with which people practiced their faith depended on the object, which assisted them in their devotion. For example, the owners of the objects would kiss or caress them and at the same time wearing the information which were carved into the surface. They would also obliterate the features of the holy figures (Chaganti 70-79). In Byzantium, icons were used in the individual devotions. The icons used in the early days were the portraits of Christ, saints and the prophets.

The appearance of the icons changed in the eleventh century to include more narrative elements and to express more emotions that are poignant. The changes enhanced the worshipers to make an individual relationship to the holy figure or enter into the elements of narrative as if present at the event.

In the Western Europe there was a form of spirituality which emerged by 1300 (Anheuser & Werner 12-15). The spirituality had an emphasis on the emotional involvement of the faithful. There was the encouragement to the faithful to contemplate events from the life of the saints or the Virgin Mary as if they were present. The sculpture of Mary and Jesus were among the most famous images of individuals devotions.

They emphasize the tender relationship that exists between the mother and child. There were also the portraits of the Virgin Mary and the body of dead Jesus Christ, which made the viewers; ponder on their sufferings (Hastings 658-666). Interaction of Byzantine Empire with Islam culture had a great impact of the Islamic arts. The rise of the Islam and their success in the military were a great threat to the stability of the whole empire and its territories. The arts acted as the medium of confrontation and cooperation between the two.

Because of the constantly changing relations of the two groups, the exchange and adaptation of the motifs and genre became a common expression of power and individuality between the two groups. Islamic leaders appreciated the Byzantine mosaics and requested the mosaicists to build the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Steward 63-68). Christian models were used by Islamic artists for iconography. Byzantine artists used the Islamic motifs for their personal use. The first church in Greece has the decorations of patterns, which have their basis on the Arab Kufic Script.

The words have no meaning but were usually used for aesthetic purposes. They are also of great value to the Islamic arts. There is also a procession

cross in Ethiopia, which is a fusion of wood sculpture and metalwork, which have great relation to the Islamic shapes and patterns. The shapes and patterns are learned from ceramic vessels and glass, which were developed in the Muslim world. The illuminated gospel from Ethiopia has a design, which has a relation with Islamic ornamentation called Harag meaning the tendril of a climbing plant (Steward 63-68). There were reliquaries, which were used by the Buddhists.

The most popular to the Buddhist were the sutras, which describes the crossing over or the passage of light. The sutras acted as the oral teachings of the Buddha. The monks usually chant the book of death during the passing of a believer into the afterlife (Hastings 658-666). This assists him or her pass through three bardo or the states, which are there afterlife. This challenges the spirit with illusions that come from his or her own mind, which prevent spiritual release.

The writings of the words on the page, which were reproduced through block writing, were considered sacred not only because of their contents but also because the Tibetan script is considered sacred. This is because it was created for the translation of the Buddhist. The Tibetans have great reverence to the books. This happens even if ten book does not have any holy scripture as it is approached as verbal body of the Buddha or the provisional foundation of eternal truth (Willis, Cribb & Shaw 53-89). This explains why in Tibet even today books are not placed on the floor, or at the level of the feet or in a place, which is deemed as impure.

The books are respected as great protections from evil and acts as the path to spiritual liberty. There is a book in Tibet known as The Tibetan book of the dead, which is said to be one the teachings which was left behind by the Pakistan saint who was known as the Precious master Padmasambhava. Its regard transcribed his teachings to his wife during the 8th century A. D. He did this out of fear that the teachings would be misused.

He had the prophesy that in about 600 years those individuals who are blessed would be able to understand the spiritual map. The prophesy is said to have come true in the 14th century when Karma Lingpa discovered Bardo Thandol in the Himalayan mountains. The reliquaries contain few crystals, which are said to be the remains of the Buddha. The reliquaries also took a variety of shapes and contain a variety of remains. In Buddha, the reliquaries can be bodily physical relics of the Buddha or eminent teacher.

It may take hair or a piece of bone. The relics are known as Saririka, and they are the most famous spiritual powerful spiritual relic type. The other type is known as paribhogaka, which represent the kind of places and objects that have been touched by a Buddha or other individuals who are taken as a reference and other things such as Buddha's robe or sites that that Buddha visited, for example, Bodh Gaya, which is the place where Buddha attained his enlighten. The reliquary of the bodily relics such as the bone and hair of a Buddha were kept in a casket. They are used as a source off inspiration for meditation upon the holy life of the deceased (Willis, Cribb & Shaw 53-89).

A reliquary is a container where relics are kept. The relics may be the remains of saints for, example bone, pieces of clothing or other objects related with popular religious figures. Different cultural groups such as the Hindus, Buddhists and the early Christians, have long used them. This is where faithful in the various religions make pilgrimages in order to have access to the merits. In the western part of Africa reliquaries are used in different rituals, for example, Bwete rituals, which contains objects, which are considered magical, or they contain bones belonging to the ancestors.

The ancestors are constructed with a guardian figure, which at most times is attached to the reliquary (Pankey 5-33). The use the reliquaries became important to Christians in the 14th century. Some of the denominations that started using the reliquaries include the Oriental Orthodox church, Roman Catholic and some of the Anglican Church. The relics act as a way of protecting the relics, which there is a belief to many that God endows them with his grace of miraculous powers. Many of them are designed with portality in mind usually exhibited in processions or exhibited in public places (Cruz Joan 1-12).

The earliest reliquaries were boxes, which had various designs, for example, the design of the church. They were also known as the shrines. By the end of the 10th century reliquaries in the shape if the relics stated becoming popular. For example, the skull of Pope Alexander 1 was placed in a reliquary, which had the shape of the head. The bones of the saints were also placed in reliquaries that recalled the body shape of the saints. In the later middle Ages, the monstrance became common.

This is a reliquary in which the relic is stored in a rock crystal or a glass capsule mounted on a rod (Anheuser & Werner 12-15). This allowed the relic to be displayed to the faithful. Reliquaries in the form of jewellery also appeared during this time. Celebration of the relics became widespread in the mid thirteenth century. This was evidenced by the increased numbers of altars, which were dedicated to a large number of saints. The reliquaries started taking the forms of monuments.

The widespread worship of the reliquary objects was associated with and miraculous cures. The quest for healing and spiritual peace increased the fashioning of reliquaries on altars in the medieval chapels and churches (Cruz Joan 1-12). During the Romanesque period, there was a surge of activity in which the relics of the saints and other popular religious figures were brought back. Pilgrims would travel to long distances to visit the shrines that had the relics of saints or their other religious figures preserved. Most the pilgrims were those who were suffering from incurable diseases or those criminals who were sentenced by Episcopal courts to make penitential pilgrimages.

Their long journey became journeys of spiritual where they would repent their sins and for the crimes, they had committed. There was also a lot of believes in traditional inclination towards sympathetic magic. Proximity to sacred lyrics was seen as one way of increasing the likelihood of a cure or spiritual cleansing. (Hastings 658-666). During the 16th century, many reformers such as Martin Luther king criticized the use of the relics. They argued that they did not provide prove of historical authenticity.

During this, times when criticism increased most of the reliquaries in Northern Europe were destroyed by the Calvinists. They were melted or pulled down so that the precious metals and materials, which were used to make them, would be recovered. Despite this, use of the relics continues today. They are mostly used by the Roman Catholics faithful and countries, which have Orthodox Christians. The reliquaries made after the reforms take the form of, glass sided caskets to display the relics. Therefore, as can be seen from the paper reliques plays a big role in the belief of many people.

They play different roles according to religions and cultural groups. They remain objects that have been used from long time ago and they are still used today. They are also important as they act as a symbol of belief that people have in relation to their God. The belief people have in them make them stronger in their beliefs. Reliques also act as symbols that unite people, for example, during pilgrimage where people from different parts meet to worship in the reliques.