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Americanizing the World? U.S. Advertising Abroad in the American Century, the View from Italy

All I can say...is that in the case of Italy, as we now stand, we cannot budget enough income to cover the expenses...but I am firmly confident that income will increase...we are today still in the position of regarding the development costs of the Continental operations as an unfortunate infliction. Yet the tendencies and pressures towards the creation of world markets are so great that...these offices which we are working so hard to build will be likely to be valuable assets to the Company (Scott 4).

This is how in 1953 a supervisor of J. Walter Thompson (JWT), the oldest and largest advertising agency in the U.S. and in the world at the time, assessed the situation of its tiny, two year old Italian branch. Like an American public relations expert who in that same year visited the country, the JWT officer didn't mince any words about the difficulties lying ahead. However, unlike his colleague, who saw "no hope for any improvement in the near future" in the face of the "corruption" of the "whole relationship between press, public, and industry" (Velmans) besetting the peninsula, the adman did not give up. Detecting some positive potential, he suggested that his superiors in New York set aside the agency's policy, whereby each foreign office should become self-sufficient within one year and repay the initial company investment in the second year, give the branch further credit, and let it continue for a few more years. Three decades on from this report, JWT Italia was still there, poised, in the words of his manager, "to make a solid 'minor' contribution" as it had consistently done until then (Campbell-Harris 1982, 4-8).

These two assessments bookending thirty years of the JWT Italian venture foreshadow a bumpy path of resilience and growth amid persistent problems and challenges. As such, they strike a chord with those familiar with the recently burgeoning literature on the history of international advertising. Prominent within such literature are inquiries into JWT providing ample evidence on the uneven and not always successful development of the agency in such diverse settings as Latin America, the UK, France, Belgium, and Australia between the interwar period and the “glorious thirties” (Scanlon; Pouillard). Similarly, the newly emerging not American-centred history of the industry has called into question the alleged absolute international pre-eminence of U.S. advertising in the so-called “American century” that until recently more or less explicitly underlay the scholarly conventional wisdom (Schwarzkopf; Nixon; Crawford).

This recent literature has informed this article alongside the increasing attention paid by scholars to competing “philosophies” of business embodied by the different agencies in relation to the ever-changing markets (Fasce 2012; Meyers). More broadly, my research draws inspiration from the large body of transnational history starting with Thomas Bender’s pioneering work and more recently Mary Nolan’s multi-directional re-mapping of the Atlantic space (Nolan 2012 and 2014). It also places itself within the analytical framework Daniel Rodgers has aptly termed “cultures in motion,” pointing to a complex web of routes, fields of contest, translation issues, and power dynamics underlying the circulation of cultural practices across time and space (Rodgers, Rama, and Reimitz).

As far as the national case at hand is concerned, the article builds on recent efforts to move beyond traditional treatments of the American presence in post-war Italian advertising. Such treatments, usually provided by former practitioners, cursorily defined the process as the “American invasion,” a formula suggesting a rapid takeover of the Italian advertising industry on the part of the U.S. operators (Ceserani). Basing themselves on a wide perusal of Italian trade magazines, lately Simona De Iulio and Carlo Vinti have shown instead that the relationship between Italian and American advertising was one of complex “hybridization” and “mediation” rather than simply a one-way influence flowing from West to East. Through a broad comparative analysis of JWT and McCann Erickson, another major U.S. agency active in Italy from the late 1950s onwards,

Elisabetta Bini and myself, have ploughed new ground by underlining the challenges that the foreign agencies encountered and the peculiar and sometimes divergent paths in terms of strategies and achievements that they individually described.

Zeroing more specifically on JWT through an in-depth examination of its company records concerning post-war Italy, this article has two goals, one at the micro, the other one at the macro level. First, it intends to offer additional material and insight on the actual, controversial impact of U.S. advertising in the country in the two decades spanning the Reconstruction through the “hot autumn” era. As such, it dovetails with Emanuela Scarpellini’s and other scholars’ path-breaking contributions on the complex adaptation and re-elaboration of the U.S. supermarket model, food practices, and consumption habits in the country in the same period (Scarpellini, 2004 and 2015; Cinotto, 2015).

Secondly, in spite of its limited significance from a strictly economic viewpoint, the Italian case provides interesting evidence for a better overall assessment of JWT and, for that matter, U.S. advertising strategies and achievements in the era of its global predominance. In the process, it suggests ways to pursue further Nolan’s ambitious project of looking at transatlantic American-European relations as truly “hybridised,” that is bidirectional and mutually influential, especially as far as consumer culture is concerned, while retaining a more cautious and restrained notion of “Americanization” (Nolan, 2012 and 2014).

Missionaries of consumption

JWT’s postwar Italian venture started in 1951. The agency was no stranger to the country. Italy had been included into the ambitious international expansion strategy that the agency had launched in the late 1920s, based on a 1927 agreement with General Motors (GM) that required JWT to set up a branch office wherever a GM plant was located. Immediately after the GM agreement was made, Thompson’s offices and companies sprang up across a wide spectrum, spanning cities like Madrid, Paris, Berlin, Bombay, Copenhagen, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, and Alexandria, Egypt (Merron). In 1928, a small office was created in Milan,

the center of the fledgling Italian advertising industry. According to an American observer visiting Italy to enquire about “foreign advertising methods,” in those years the country did not look particularly promising to American exporters, given its still largely rural and backward economy and the limited size of its consumer market. Unlike the Anglo-American model revolving around the full service agency, Italian advertising based itself on two strictly separate circuits: outdoor posters, produced by artists within small studios, and ads placed in the papers by a few brokers or “concessionaries,” selling space to advertisers (Fasce, Bini).

JWT’s first Italian experience was to be short-lived. For the length of its four-year-run (1928-1932) American and English personnel oversaw the Milan office that never became an independent branch. Neither did the small unit ever include a creative department, relying instead on foreign branches (first Alexandria, Egypt, and then Antwerp) to produce its original material. The advertisements, which concerned exclusively U.S. and British accounts and appeared in Italian dailies and newly emerging magazines addressed to middle-class women, were simply translations of the American ones, in accordance with the agency’s so-called “pattern” strategy to run standardized campaigns based on the assumption that “people are fundamentally alike the world over.” By 1932, overwhelmed by economic and political problems, the agency shut down (Foote 2; Gaudenzi 111).

JWT’s London branch, since the early 20th century the linchpin of its initiatives in Europe, closely guided the 1951 reopening and gradual evolution of the Italian business, with some help from its Paris office. Having just reopened in 1950, this latter office was coordinating continental advertising and publicity activities for the U.S. Economic Cooperating Administration (ECA), headquartered in Paris (Hultquist). A mission - a term that truly befits the attitude of these admen who perceived themselves as “missionaries of modernity” in hopelessly “backward” countries (Scanlon; de Grazia) - was sent to Italy from London to handle the local segment of the ECA campaign. As in Paris, the person entrusted with the newly established Italian branch in Milan was not American, but English: David James. An Oxford and Yale graduate, who had also studied at the University of Florence, James started his advertising life as a copywriter in the JWT London office in the early 1930s, quickly earning a reputation

for his innovative work for renowned chocolate makers Rowntree, before moving to the London branch of another major US agency, Lord & Thomas. After the war, during which he served in the Royal Artillery in North Africa, James quit advertising altogether to work for the British Council in Turkey. Invited by a friend to re-join JWT in London, he was eventually dispatched to Italy, due to his first hand acquaintance with the country, where he had not only studied but, in the early 1930s, had also met his wife-to-be Giulietta (Campbell-Harris 1964).

When James set up shop in Milan, still the stronghold of the industry in the country, the Italian advertising expenditure paled in comparison with Britain (sixfold larger) and the U.S. (50 times its size) (Fasce 2001, 214). Traditionally a small domestic market, it was further hampered by the ravages of war. Like in the interwar years, it was dominated by a plethora of tiny graphic design studios (J. Walter Thompson (Italia) Annual Marketing Report, 1967) averaging four staff members (Brioschi). Such operators were flanked by the in-house departments of a few major northern durable goods manufacturers like Fiat, Olivetti, and Pirelli. A third major actor was constituted by the already mentioned brokers or “concessionaries” still playing a strong role in selling space on the media, especially local newspapers, to advertisers. The constraints of reconstruction kept advertising budgets firmly below pre-war levels. Aesthetic and design quality, which had long been the signature of the Italian advertising tradition, remained the distinctive features of the sector (De Iulio and Vinti).

In the early 1950s, the only other full-service agency in the country besides JWT was Lintas, the in-house agency of Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever, which had started up in Italy in 1948. Its parent company accounts allowed Lintas to thrive and earn a reputation as “the single greatest university of advertising in Italy” (J. Walter Thompson (Italia) Annual Marketing Report 1967). Another major British agency, Colman Prentiss and Varley (CPV), came to play a similar role (Ceserani). CPV opened a branch in Milan in 1952, as part of a broader foreign-expansion strategy that intensified in the 1950s and 1960s reaching out to the Pacific. Having started with two huge British accounts, Shell and Colgate, CPV soon surpassed Lintas to become the leading agency in Italy, a position that it retained until the late 1960s (Falabrino).

The accounts brought by the two British agencies across the Channel gave them the financial resources to expand and build a staff, who were then sent to London for training (J. Walter Thompson (Italia) Annual Marketing Report 1967). This indigenous contribution, comprising such young philosophy graduates turned brilliant copywriters as Giancarlo Livraghi, enabled CPV to define itself “an international agency thinking in Italian” (Fasce and Bini 21). Arguably, a certain affinity between the stylish and witty British advertising tradition and that of Italy helped to ease the connection between these two worlds (Nixon).

How did JWT fare within this challenging environment? Let us go back to the 1953 internal report from which we started. It was sent to New York by Denys Scott, a former art director turned into manager. Like other Anglo-American observers in the field, Scott highlighted the factors that accounted for the predominance of tiny, artisanal, loosely organized advertising production units. Such factors included the chronic problem of the market’s limited size, the absence of uniform standards for accrediting agencies, the small and uneven nature of the agency commissions, and the absence of standard media rates and reliable circulation data on which to base such rates (Scott).

Yet, as we saw, against all odds Scott envisioned “potentialities” for “business, even much business, to be had in Italy.” He therefore suggested that the New York office should give the fledging Italian branch more credit. Fully aware of the difficulties this would imply, Scott pointed to Unilever as a main target, according to JWT’s long-standing policy of going after one big client and build around that its whole strategy. He also expressed hopes that another crucial factor - namely James’s difficult, “oversensitive,” too “argumentative” personality - could be held in check, to the extent, Scott concluded betraying his mixed feelings over the matter, that this was “possible for someone of 45” (Scott 5).

The economic miracle

Recurring discussions with and over James concerning his irritability, as well as his administrative and managerial limitations would punctuate the life of JWT's Milan branch in the following decade. After a few years of barely surviving in the late 1950s, JWT shared in the steady expansion of the advertising business that accompanied and fostered the so-called "Italian economic miracle" (Campbell-Harris 1988). While the Italian advertising industry still lagged behind the rest of the western world in expenditure, its turnover grew by 150 percent between 1949 and 1958. In the meantime, magazines and newspapers had strengthened their leading role as the most widely used advertising medium, followed by radio and outdoor advertising (Fasce, Bini, Gaudenzi).

The expansion and increasing concentration of the business brought opportunities unheard of for the big agencies (operators with at least ten employees and applying the standard 15 per-cent commission) which, by the early 1960s, accounted for 40 percent of the national market. This development prompted all the main American agencies to start coming to Italy in the late 1950s. In turn, JWT's billings increased tenfold over the thin figures of the mid-1950s, placing the agency third after CPV and Lintas among the major operators (James; J. Walter Thompson (Italia) Annual Marketing Report, 1967).

Accordingly, the staff soared from seven to 60 people. The company's portfolio still comprised mostly international, i.e. American, clients like Kodak, Kraft, Pepsi-Cola, and Unilever, with a few minor forays into the Italian industrial world as well. Increasingly, the work of adapting original U.S. campaigns for the local market entailed re-elaboration and intervention by the creative section of the agency, with the incisive contribution of a research department created in the late 1950s under the leadership of a former Pepsi-Cola manager from London (Fasce and Bini 14). Still in its infant stage in the peninsula, marketing practice was to prove the most substantial and enduring influence exerted by American advertising on the Italian scene (Codeluppi; Fasce, Bini, Gaudenzi).

A comparison between two campaigns from the 1950s and 1960s illustrates the gradual but steady evolution of the branch in its efforts to adapt or invent new catchy expressions and alluring images by combining

the insights stemming from the research unit with the inspiration of creative teams, increasingly made up of Italian publicists or admen from other agencies. The first one, a 1957-58 magazine ad for Omo detergent, was nothing more than a translation of an Angloamerican pattern, showing two housewives who looked distinctly American caught in the act of comparing the outcome of their laundry, a comparison that resulted in the celebration of the brand advertised. On the contrary, the second one, a 1963 advert for Lux soap, reflected a growing concern with the specificity of the Italian market. Based on the finding that Italian Lux consumers attributed particular emotional value to the act of caressing their own faces, JWT Italia had developed the idea to “humanize” the local movie stars hired as endorsers. Rather than in the standard detached diva-like fashion, in magazine ads and TV spots they appeared in the act of touching their faces delicately with their hands filled with creamy soap (*Qui...Thompson* 3).

Always eager to help out his subordinates in developing an idea or coining a slogan, James proved much less successful when it came to turnover and profits, as the New York headquarters never failed to emphasize by pointing to the “disturbing...figures” of the branch. Operating results showed losses for six out of ten years between 1954 and 1963 (Meek; Italy-Comparative Operating Results 1954-1968). After being repeatedly urged to improve on his managerial performance, ultimately James had to resign in 1963 and pursued a career as a free-lance consultant. As his successor David Campbell-Harris would remark several years later, he

probably considered himself an intellectual...certainly he was happier in intellectual contexts, which explains why he was so happy working in the British Council... he would have been happier in the academic world... was indeed a valuable person to any agency but he should have continued as he started as an inside problem solver and creator and not as the head of an agency” (Campbell-Harris 1988, 3).

Unquestionably, by picking up David Campbell-Harris, as an account, New York chose James’ successor with the intention of strengthening the managerial and administrative side of an agency whose payroll had reached 125 employees within a national industry where the average advertising production unit did not exceed six people (Brioschi). Sticking closely to

the standard procedures of the company, the branch confirmed the absolute predominance of the Angloamerican component in the managerial and highest professional positions. These remained firmly in the hands of foreigners, mostly British, with just one American. British was Campbell-Harris, fifteen years James's junior, an Eton and Exeter graduate with extensive experience as an account manager for JWT in England, the U.S., and Brazil, and some familiarity with Italy too in the early 1950s. His ascent to the helm of the branch marked a generational and professional shift away from James's tenure (JWT-Milan Marketing Plan 1970). Campbell-Harris's management was more balanced, as shown by the agency's greater visibility and recognition within the international structure of JWT and its improved economic performance during the second half of the 1960s. The Milan office managed to expand its business while cutting losses and actually enjoying some profits, reaching and even slightly exceeding, the expected 1.5 and two percent (JWT-Milan Marketing Plan 1969).

The expansion included an increasing Italian clientele. Comprising over 30 percent of the portfolio by the end of the 1960s, it was mostly made up of manufacturers poised to break into the European market and thus willing to invest in such a more expensive advertising service as the one provided by JWT than their traditional, "homemade" forms of promotion. Through them the Italian branch fed other JWT offices in the old continent, thus garnering official praise from New York. "This is how it should be," president Dan Seymour commented approvingly, in a long appreciative article about the Milan branch in the agency's corporate bulletin. In it, he reminded there should be no "one-way street" in the company, Milan representing "a strong application of this principle" (*J. Walter Thompson Company News* 12).

Through Italian clients like Gancia, a market leader in wine, JWT also participated in *Carosello*, a program made up of a series of commercials shown after the evening news on the first channel of the *Radiotelevisione Italiana* (RAI). As De Iulio and Vinti have remarked, these spots were a major challenge for the foreign agencies, which considered them a deep source of frustration. Unlike the U.S. commercials, the rules of RAI, which reflected the prevailing educational thrust of the Italian public broadcasting service, stipulated that only one third of the spot - that is the last 30 seconds out of a total of one minute and 45 seconds - could be devoted to the commercial

message (De Iuli and Vinti 286). This at first induced JWT officers to bemoan the almost total lack of “real selling” in Italy. On the other hand, as shown by the successful combination of intensive market research and creative work underlying JWT spots for Gancia sparkling wine, Carosello proved an apt arena for meshing U.S. broadcasting advertising tradition and the more artistic, theatrical Italian one (Fasce and Bini 16).

The hearts and souls of business

In the light of such developments, it may seem ironic that JWT Italia slipped down the advertising agency ladder as the 1960s unfolded. Despite the fact that its business had improved, JWT found itself quickly losing ground among the community of large agencies that finally succeeded in controlling 60 percent of the national market by the late 1960s. The most successful proved to be Young & Rubicam (Y&R) (established in 1963) and McCann Erickson (started in 1959), which increasingly challenged and by 1968-69 actually topped CPV and Lintas, also leaving JWT behind (JWT-Milan Marketing Plan 1969; JWT-Milan Marketing Plan 1970).

Trying to make sense of why JWT had slipped below the other two American agencies, Campbell-Harris first pointed to the rivals’ unfair practices of breaking the American “golden rule” of a fixed commission and lowering their rates to accept Italian and international business. He exposed their no less deplorable habit of placing “many of their staff and all of their non-Italian staff...on the payroll” which meant “that many of the heavy social contributions payments” were “avoided.” Yet he could hardly hide from himself and his superiors in New York what he considered the main reason for Y&R’s success, namely its superiority from a creative standpoint. Conceding the “grey look attributed to Thompson” in Italy (JWT-Milan Marketing Plan 1969, 1), and indeed even in Britain too, compared with its rivals, he seemed to accept the opinion of the Italian advertising organizations that had awarded Y&R their annual prizes due to its humorous, witty and unconventional approach. Long its signature, this approach, adapted to the Italian environment by a team of British and local creatives may have equipped the agency to adjust to and negotiate with the

“artistic” and “imaginative” orientation of indigenous advertising. This adjustment, Campbell-Harris concluded, was further eased by the fact that Y&R Italy had soon placed at its helm an Italian adman with good political connections, a technician whom it had inherited from a small Italian agency bought out while entering the local market.

The “claims” of “Italianness” that Y&R felt entitled to make were even stronger, Campbell-Harris remarked, in the case of McCann Erickson. By 1966, after a dizzying turnover of foreign managers in a matter of a few years, the agency had succeeded in wresting Giancarlo Livraghi, a brilliant former-copywriter-turned-manager, from CPV and placing him at the helm of the branch. This was in keeping with the international strategy adopted by the agency in the early 1960s, expanding on a global scale the successful experience acquired in Latin America since the interwar years and especially in the post-war era. The strategy consisted in entering foreign markets by buying out a local operator and delegating the conduction of business to new generations of indigenous admen, many of whom had studied or worked internationally, but knew the specificities of the local market. During the second half of the 1960s, McCann Erickson Italiana would place its “Italianness” at the center of its institutional advertisements addressed to a clientele that increasingly comprised, alongside such major international clients as Esso, GM, and Coca Cola, leading Italian brands like Martini, Cinzano, and Ferrero. “Please, talk to us in Italian,” the agency urged its clients by pointing out that “if you want to discuss your market problems, talk to us in Italian, because this is our language” (Fasce and Bini 21).

In an effort to overturn the primacy of its rivals, Campbell-Harris therefore stressed the need for JWT to cut down “on the number of foreigners in this agency,” and, above all, that “those that we have must ...be completely integrated” into the culture of the host country “with an intensive effort on their part.” This statement marked a departure from the agency’s traditional emphasis on the primary need for local employees of its foreign branches to learn English. Now, for the first time the agency explicitly prioritized “a good working use of Italian” by its foreign personnel and a full integration into the environment in which they operated, while also adopting a more flexible and consumer-oriented type of organization first introduced on an experimental basis by JWT London in 1967 (JWT-Milan Marketing Plan 1969, 23).

Seemingly, these moves were insufficient to challenge the primacy of Y&R (1968) and eventually McCann Erickson (1971), however. It was probably too little, too late. As is typical with organizations, the very long record of success accumulated by the JWT model in the U.S. and elsewhere proved a major standing block in the way of any efforts to critically break the agency's rather monolithic and increasingly ineffective corporate culture. Built around the notion of the so-called "one world," that is the Tayloristic idea that "people were basically the same everywhere," in spite of its best intentions of engaging thoroughly other cultural environments, that model left little room for substantial articulation, let alone absorption at the corporate level, of organizational and cultural inputs coming from abroad. Hence the disdain and condescension with which JWT had looked upon McCann's decision to appoint a Brazilian manager at its helm in New York since the early 1960s. Hence the long time it took before overturning the principle - an article of faith for JWT since its earliest international ventures - whereby the command of languages other than English need not be of major concern to the agency and its Anglo-American managers and professionals.

Traces of this in-built rigidity could be found in the way JWT Italia reacted to a novel kind of challenge emerging with the new decade. At the dawn of the 1970s, the long social wave of the "hot autumn" did not spare the Milanese advertising industry. After erupting among the youngest, most precarious, and inherently most combative employees of the sector, namely the temps employed at Y&R and McCann, labor unrest extended to JWT. This led its Angloamerican managers to resurrect threadbare stereotypes and vague notions of "Mediterranean immaturity," "Latin uncontrolled emotionality," "indulgence in childish behavior," traditionally attached to an allegedly unchangeable "Italian national character," in order to make sense of young and old employees' demands for better working conditions and some measure of control on the organization of their labor. Italians were "good" when taken "one by one," but were "collectively impossible" to deal with, Campbell-Harris pontificated, while lamenting that "it is a curious thing that the full service agency concept has taken so long to get here and that now it is here on a reasonable starting basis along comes a group of people to challenge its future in an original fashion" (JWT Milan Report and Agenda 1971; Muttarelli).

However, after a couple of years of intermittent disturbances, social conflict subsided without too much damage to business. It was instead the unheard of issues of the energy crisis and the attendant economic recession that became top priority on the agenda of JWT and its rivals. Yet the “lean” 1970s that saw JWT Italia struggling to provide its “solid ‘minor’ contribution” to the mother agency, in the words of Campbell-Harris (Campbell-Harris 1982, 26), lie well beyond the confines of this article. Let us turn instead to the implications emerging from our story.

Conclusions

First, the article confirms the importance of moving beyond the idea that the presence of American advertising in post-WWII Italy can be analyzed within a binary framework. While U.S. operators undoubtedly played a crucial part in the process of internationalizing the industry, this should not obscure the active mediation and independent initiatives carried out by other forces: 1) indigenous professionals operating inside and outside the American agencies; 2) professionals working for these agencies who were neither Americans nor natives of the countries in which they operated; and 3) foreign, but non-American, agencies. This complex interaction was based less on a one-way transfer of approaches from the U.S. to Italy and more on a multifaceted transatlantic dialogue among American, British, and Italian advertisers and agencies and professionals whose experience encompassed a transnational and global dimension (Fasce and Bini).

The different strategies adopted by the American agencies also played a significant role in helping them appeal to the Italian market. True, by the early 1960s JWT recognized the importance of adapting U.S. advertising campaigns to local contexts. Yet the agency continued to approach the Italian market somewhat rigidly with a model oscillating between what current observers would now define a “global,” that is basically one fit all model, and an “international” one, with adaptations to the local contexts (Falcounbridge 24-25). Y&R and even more McCann Erickson, on the other hand, were much more flexible, by placing non-Americans in key positions and assuring the autonomy of its various national branches. In Italy, such an approach, that resembles what is now called among experts

“transnational” model, led the agency to devote particular attention to the local context by employing a new generation of Italian admen who had been trained by international agencies like CPV and Lintas and were familiar with the specific market.

Secondly, speaking of the larger Atlantic scene, the article’s findings are in accord with Mary Nolan’s recent remarks expanding and updating her groundbreaking work on the Atlantic connections. Summing up the now long debate on “Americanization,” Nolan emphasizes the advisability of still using the notion when “looking at production and consumption” but in a much more critical and restrained manner than in the past, with a clear sense of its spatial and chronological limits. JWT’s twisted path adds ample documentary evidence to this position (Nolan 2014). No less important, concerning Nolan’s major innovative point, that is the attention to two-sided circulations of ideas and practices across the ocean (Nolan 2012), our story shows, at least in the case of JWT, no significant trace of such a development.

Thirdly, the article contributes to the broader picture of the American presence in the world in the second half of the twentieth-century. It suggests the uneasy and yet vital coexistence, within an indisputable American imperial phase, of widely different components. They range from hegemonic, but regionally mediated and divided by market competition, impulses coming from the U.S., to old and new regional energies and professional practices emerging at a continental level, to global trajectories and local experiences that in various and often conflicting ways contributed shaping and remapping American horizons and influences. Limited as it may be in scope, given its microhistorical bent, our story confirms U.S. hegemonic and imperial economic and cultural aspirations and achievements (Kramer), but invites additional empirical probe on the nature and contents of the American “Global Republic” (Ninkovich).

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