GLOBAL PERSUASION:
POWER AND THE FOUR CONTINENT ALLEGORIES ON
PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Professor Wendy Bellion, whose advising and editing only made this thesis stronger;

To Professor Margaret Werth, whose thoughtful notes helped refine my words at a critical point in writing;

To Greta Greenberger, for her immense knowledge and love of Philadelphia City Hall, and for sharing her time with me at the very beginning;

To Professor Michael Leja, and his fall 2009 seminar at the University of Pennsylvania-- the ideas for this thesis began there, and discussion with him and my classmates shaped how I initially thought about these intriguing pieces of public art;

To Katie Wood, who patiently listened to me rattle on about a million ideas before I finally decided on this one, and offered her thoughts and friendship as I wrote;

To my mother, whose sense of exploration caused me to look closely at Philadelphia City Hall for the first time, where I encountered Milne Calder’s crypt. Her strength is a constant reminder that giving up is not an option.

And most of all, to Brian Flanagan. Thank you for your love and support. I could not ask for a better sounding board and partner than someone who understands that I work best in the late night hours and knows the ins and outs of Philadelphia City Hall better than I do.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the civic and artistic motivations for the creation of the elaborate, exterior sculptural program at Philadelphia City Hall from 1871-1901 and the importance of the imposing figures of global allegory in particular. Using a wealth of archival documents in Philadelphia as the basis for this study, it posits that the architects, advisory board and sculptor worked in tandem to erect sculpture that would project the city’s growing economic might while articulating the hope that Philadelphia would again gain the global presence it achieved in the late colonial period. Alexander Milne Calder’s continental allegories of Asia, Africa, Europe and America were of the utmost importance in imparting this message to citizens of the city and visitors alike. Through their repetition and highly visible, symbolic placement in the building, these sculptural groups helped broadcast civic aspirations through familiar iconography.

The first part of this thesis analyzes the space and iconography of the four continent allegories at City Hall, and how the choices made there conveyed coded meanings to viewers. Issues of spatiality and access guided the ways power was communicated to these viewers, and thus determined how successful the Commissioners of City Hall were in imparting their vision of Philadelphia’s national and global prominence. The second part of the paper traces the construction and
conception of City Hall within the socio-political framework of Philadelphia, analyzing why at this moment the Commissioners would choose these symbols for this most public building.
INTRODUCTION

In 1854, the City of Philadelphia annexed large communities bordering the city limits, raising its population to over half a million practically overnight.¹ This meteoric population increase, in addition to heavy immigration, necessitated a larger municipal government and a place to house it. It was at this time that discussions began concerning the construction of a new City Hall. Unsurprisingly for such a monumental undertaking, the building’s location, architectural style, and progress were hotly debated from 1860, the date of the first architectural competition for the design of City Hall, until long after the structure’s completion in 1901. The building, (Figure 1), encompasses the five acre Centre Square, one of William Penn’s original five squares in the center of Philadelphia. It has remained the largest municipal seat in the nation since its erection. Though its location, size and elaborate sculptural program

¹ Under the Consolidation Act of 1854, neighboring Manayunk, Northern Liberties, Southwark, and Kensington, among others, officially became part of Philadelphia. Whom the City served changed dramatically at this time. Philadelphia census numbers reflect this change: the 1850 population was 121,376, while the 1860 census recorded 565,529 residents.
make it the biggest, most prominent display of public art in Philadelphia, City Hall’s architectural sculpture has received very little scholarly attention.

Until recently, most Philadelphians hated the new City Hall. Rallies to tear the building down and replace it were common throughout the nineteenth century and continued until the 1970s under Director of City Planning Edmund Bacon. Paul Cret (1876-1945), head of the University of Pennsylvania’s school of architecture for over thirty years and creator of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, which begins at City Hall, also advocated for its destruction. Cret, like many critics in the early twentieth century, found City Hall’s location bothersome and its style outdated. However, the massive expense of carting away tons of brick saved this eclectic Second Empire “marble monster” from destruction during its less popular years.

Architectural sketches in the Paul Philippe Cret Collection at the University of Pennsylvania Archives show that Cret envisioned Centre Square once more as a public park, with the tower of City Hall remaining intact.

There has been much debate as to the classification of the building’s architectural style. David van Zanten has given the most probing look, deeming the building to be strongly influenced by Visconti’s redesigned Louvre from 1854. Variations on Visconti’s design became common choices for American administrative buildings in the era following the Civil War, and City Hall is part of this group. The term “Second Empire” remains a complicated misnomer, as the style here is more directly linked to the French Baroque revival. See David Van Zanten, "Second Empire Architecture in Philadelphia." Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin 74, no. 322, The Second Empire and Philadelphia (Sep., 1978): 9-24. City Hall was referred to as a “marble monster” for much of the nineteenth century. The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin apparently coined the phrase in the 1870s, fueled by supposed corruption in the assignment of the building’s marble contracts. This issue is addressed more extensively in Roger Butterfield, "The Cats on City Hall." The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and
A full exterior cleaning, still currently underway, has again enlivened the building’s over four hundred and fifty unique sculptural works. Positive reaction to the restoration reveals how much public opinion towards this structure has changed in recent years. The sculptures are the work of Alexander Milne Calder, the Scottish-born émigré who from 1872-1893 labored over City Hall’s extensive allegorical program alongside the building’s architect John McArthur, Jr. and the Buildings Commission president Samuel C. Perkins. They chose to depict themes of good government, justice and industry in every possible exterior space of the building. The decorative scheme is extensive and seemingly exhaustive—awash with depictions of local flora and fauna, allegorical personifications representing everything from manufactory to repentance, and explicitly honoring William Penn, the city’s founder, with a giant bronze statue atop the tower.

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5 Alexander Milne Calder is absent from art history books, though his family’s dedication to public sculpture is not. His son, Alexander Stirling Calder (1870-1945), and grandson, Alexander “Sandy” Calder (1898-1976), of modernist mobile fame, continued the Calder dedication to public art begun by Alexander Milne Calder at City Hall.
Though it seems that not one allegorical trope or symbolic flower was forgotten, references to American military history are strangely absent at City Hall. The Civil War and the Revolutionary War, with the exception of a keystone depicting Benjamin Franklin’s head, do not constitute part of the program. Though the architects of the recently completed Capitol addition in Washington had deliberately avoided the divisive issue of the war between the states in its decorative work, and a similar argument might have been made for City Hall, the choice to omit any depiction of the Revolutionary War, particularly as Philadelphia was at the center of much early national history, seems unusual. It underscores that instead of mere commemoration, the sculpture on City Hall was meant to convey broader themes that were forward-looking, allegorical, and international in nature, not simply national and historical.

While the sheer number of works that Calder and his assistants created for City Hall was meant to impress on a grand scale—visually dominating the landscape of the city—the allegories utilized there served the Commissioners’ ideological goals in a no less significant manner. The worldly personifications of the four continents on the building mark Philadelphia’s rapidly growing industrial prominence in the post-Civil War nation and the city’s renewed global importance in the wake of the Centennial.

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6 The national Capitol addition employed sculpture, mock-frescoes and paintings that elaborated on the discovery and early national history of America. The theme was also utilized in the Pennsylvania State Capitol and the New York State Capitol, both erected around the same time as Philadelphia’s City Hall.
Exhibition of 1876. These sculptures construct political and racial hegemonies at a time when American naval power was growing strong and expanding colonial territory abroad was becoming a priority for the nation. The efforts of the Commissioners to assert the city’s significance on a global scale—through sculptural allegories on the new City Hall, and more subtly through the display and promotion of this building to world leaders—demonstrate in stone their hope for the city’s re-emergence as a powerful, cosmopolitan center.

This thesis investigates the civic and artistic motivations for the creation of the elaborate, exterior sculptural program at Philadelphia City Hall and the importance of the imposing figures of global allegory in particular. The architects, advisory board and sculptor worked in tandem to erect sculpture that would project the city’s growing economic might while articulating the hope that Philadelphia would again gain the global presence it achieved in the late colonial period. Alexander Milne Calder’s continental allegories of Asia, Africa, Europe and America were of the utmost importance in imparting this message to citizens of the city and visitors alike. Through their repetition and highly visible, symbolic placement in the building, these sculptural groups helped broadcast civic aspirations through familiar iconography.

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Close primary source research on City Hall and its Commissioners, including letters, meeting minutes, official guide books, newspaper articles, payroll, and other extant archival documents, form the basis of this work. Building on studies of civic space, race, and construction of power by scholars Vivian Fryd and Michele Bogart, as well as others, this paper diverges from these studies by identifying the truly public placement of these sculptural groups as the key to their success, or lack thereof. While prevailing contemporary attitudes about colonialization no doubt helped inform the artistic choices made for City Hall, it is true that the depictions on the building were not necessarily a mirror of public opinion. Rather, the sculpture reflects the aspirations and hopes of a very small group of politically powerful Philadelphians. The allegories of the four continents served a unique purpose in the visual landscape of the city, one that the Commissioners had explicitly intended.

Methodologically, this paper begins with analyzing the sculptures as objects, and places them within the social and physical context in which they were made and understood. Art historical scholarship within and outside of the field of American art
offers useful methodologies for this study. The work of Jane Welch Williams on space and viewship in the Cathedral of Chartres stresses how the placement of stained glass windows and sculpture as part of a larger architectural scheme leads the viewer through space and forces an interaction with those objects. Cynthia Mills’s studies of site specific meaning in funerary monuments also inform how the surroundings of sculptural objects help imbue them with deeper meaning, which would be lost if these sculptures were relocated. Mills and Williams, along with others, helped inform much of how this thesis deals with the importance of space and place in the understanding of the continental allegories of Philadelphia City Hall.
BUILDING THE MARBLE MONSTERS

We are erecting a structure that will, in ages to come, speak for us as with ‘the tongues of men and angels.' This work which we now do, as it were in the morning hour of our being, will probably,… in some far off future day, be all that remains to tell the story of our civilization, and to testify to the dignity and public spirit of our people…we make this, our monument, to tell the world and posterity how provident we are—…to speak to men as it were in words of marble...We have done and are doing a great, great work, and it will inspire our posterity to live up to our standard, as we are inspired to live by the standard of our ancestors.7

This eloquent speech, given at the laying of the City Hall cornerstone July 4, 1874, underscores the link between Philadelphia’s rising global prominence, thus their “providence,” and lessons the building itself could communicate to the populace. Such sentiment in those integral to shaping the building of the new City Hall—Perkins, McArthur and Calder—would be carried out in a number of ways, most impressively through the grandeur of the building, both in size and ornamentation. The allegorical sculpture on City Hall emphasized manufactory, in tandem with repeated allegorical depictions of the “four continents.” Sculpted scenes showing men at work, such as

7 Programme of ceremonies of the laying of the corner stone of the new public buildings in Penn Square, Philadelphia, Saturday, July 4th, 1874. Published for the Commissioners for the Erection of New Public Buildings, Philadelphia, 1874, 3.
Figure 2, as well as allegorical figures depicting different stages of manufactory and industry, adorned all sides of the building. At least one such sculpture was placed on each major entrance to the City Hall courtyard. On this most prominent building of the “workshop of the world,” as Philadelphia was then known, the combination of these allegorical sculptural groups was especially effective in conveying messages of global, economic strength.

The significance of these continental allegories will be the focus for this study of Calder’s sculptural work for City Hall, particularly the sculptural group of the “four continents” in a vestibule along a passageway accessed from the northern arcade of the building (Figure 3). This relatively small space is known as “the crypt” (Figures 4, 5) as the cornerstone of the building is “buried” here at the base of the building’s tower. A floor plan of the ground level of City Hall shows the thirty-seven foot square area (Figures 6a and b), and reveals the twenty-two foot thick masonry load bearing walls that surround it. The crypt contains four red granite columns, each three feet in diameter and topped with sculpted sandstone capitals depicting the peoples of the “four continents”: Europe, Asia, America and Africa (Figures 7-10). Surrounding them, along the walls of the crypt, are twelve rectangular pilasters with capitals depicting the “babies” of the four continents, who resemble racialized putti (Figures

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8 Many early descriptions of City Hall deem the space “crypt-like,” and the City Hall Visitor’s Center still refers to it in this manner. See City Hall of Philadelphia: Northern Entrance. Philadelphia, c.1880, for an early reference.
11-14). Keystones above each of the four entranceways to the space, on the north, east, west and south sides, depict conventional animal symbols for the continents: the heads of a bull, an elephant, a bear, and a tiger (Figures 15-18).

As the continental capitals, animal head keystones, and putti in the crypt were conceived for this particular space, and no other, the meaning of the allegories was intrinsically tied to the location and placement within the architectural ensemble. Cynthia Mills has argued that the intended message of Augustus St. Gaudens’s (1848-1907) 1891 Adams Memorial was changed when duplicates were viewed in other contexts and locales, even those with ostensibly the same function, such as gravesite markers.⁹ Here too, the meaning of the sculptural group is tied to the presence of the exposed cornerstone, the building and its enormous tower, as well as the city beyond. Engaging with the sculptural group without acknowledgement of these basic conditions of its significance renders it less meaningful, and in effect changes its ideological message.

The ideological message of the sculpture is inherently connected to the iconographical history of the “four continents”—Europe, Asia, America and Africa—depicted in the crypt as the peoples of the world. This history’s origins lie in the

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classical theory of the four humors. People were believed to have been made up of four elements: yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood. Each element, or humor, corresponded with certain medical conditions and it was believed that illness within the body could be fixed by equalizing these elements. In medicine, these conceptions were deep rooted and continued into the nineteenth century, with common practices such as blood letting, or cupping, attempting to equalize the four elements of the body. In painting and sculpture, the depiction of characteristics associated with the four humors was often the basis for depictions of the four associated seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter. With time, the four seasons and the dispositions associated with them were then transposed onto allegories of the four continents and their roles in relation to one another. These allegorical depictions were outlined as early as 1603, in Cesare Ripa’s first illustrated Iconologica. Like their medical counterparts, the depiction of the allegorical “four continents” continued in popularity well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Though medical theory on the four humors emphasized the need for equality of all four elements to achieve health, the allegory of the four continents was always

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11 Reproductions of Cesare Ripa’s suggested personifications and associated symbolism for the four continents can be found in Corbellier, “Miss America and Her Sisters,” 216-217.
coded, centering on power and inequality in the depictions of the continents and giving priority to the personification of Europe. The depictions of each continent became artistic tropes and artworks that employed them were often based on Ripa’s descriptions and illustrations. E. McClung Fleming has traced the personification of “America” in particular, from what he calls an “Indian Queen” in early depictions of the four continents, to an “Indian princess” in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century, a Greek goddess-like figure, Columbia or Liberty, wearing a Phrygian cap, came to stand in for the newest continent. This figure became the standard for depictions of “America” in the nineteenth century as well. “Europe” was regularly personified as an older woman, regal in stature and wearing a crown, often with her foot atop a globe. Depictions of “Africa” and “Asia” varied slightly more, but included women in fantastical ancient dress and elaborate headdresses, lounging and often surrounded by exotic animals and jewels. These iconographical choices were deeply


13 Calder utilized allegorical figures with Phrygian caps in other areas of the City Hall decorative sculpture to stand in for both Liberty and America. He did not, however, employ this convention in any of the allegorical sculpture depicting the four continents.
rooted in Euro-centric views of the world and revealed Renaissance ideas of non-European quarters of the world as overflowing in untapped resources—gold, timber and labor among them. The use of these allegorical figures in nineteenth century sculpture, such as those at Philadelphia City Hall, reveals an ideological link to these past associations and therefore a re-assertion of many of the hegemonies present in their earlier artistic depictions.

Early known European artworks depicting the four continents, such as the allegorical frescoes in the Sala del Mappamondo at the Palazzo Farnese outside of Rome, (Figure 19), were rarely publicly viewed, and were almost exclusively part of larger decorative schemes of grand homes of the extremely wealthy and powerful.\textsuperscript{14} The Palazzo Farnese’s frescoes were created between 1573-1575 to glorify its owner, a cardinal in the Catholic Church, and also to show the pope’s assumed religious dominance over the known world. These allegorical depictions also often celebrated recent discoveries in charting the world’s continents and oceans, by surrounding large maps of the world, as they do in the Palazzo Farnese. Nearly a century later, the

\textsuperscript{14} Often confused with the other Palazzo Farnese in Rome, this villa was built by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III, in Caprarola, Italy. See Paul Cohen, “Worlds on the Walls.” \textit{Culture + Travel}, April/May 2007, 72-79. Another well-known example of elaborate murals depicting the allegories of the four continents in a home of a wealthy patron is Giovanni Battista Tiepolo’s mid-eighteenth century paintings for the Rezidenz in Würzburg, discussed briefly in Hugh Honour, \textit{The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time} (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 113-117.
continental imagery still played a large role in Catholic art—Hugh Honour has argued that Andrea Pozzo’s frescoes of America and the other continents on the ceiling of St. Ignacio in Rome influenced the designs of Catholic missionary churches. While this may be possible, most missionary churches around the world were so rudimentarily constructed it is hard to believe that they would have been decorated in this manner. More significant, perhaps, is the Church’s repeated use of this allegorical imagery in private and later in more public spaces, asserting its dominance not only over the earthly terrain, but also over the personifications of the continents. Images of angels and the Trinity were always located higher in the picture plane than the continents and as such physically dominated those viewing the works.15

Jan van Kessel’s series of paintings of the four continents (Figures 20-23), created nearly a century after the frescoes of the Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola, come on the heels of Dutch colonial success in South America and during the era termed the “Dutch Golden Age.”16 The four painting groups exhibit the flora and fauna of each continent around a larger allegorical painting. In each, as in many other examples from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, the allegories of each continent are


16 This series was painted during the era of heightened Dutch naval power and colonization in Brazil, Africa, North America and the East Indies during the latter half of the seventeenth century. The colony of Dutch Brazil was claimed in 1630 and officially ceded to Portugal in 1661. See Dante Martins Teixeira et al, *Brasil Holandês*
personified as women, carrying symbolic flora and fauna and accompanied by animals and putti correlating to each’s continent. These was particularly popular in work by Flemish artists during the mid to late 1600’s, not least of all because it linked the global power most often ascribed earlier to the Catholic Church to the growing Dutch colonial empire, a link that would have been particularly resonant following the Eighty Years War of independence from the Catholic nation of Spain.

The artistic conventions seen in earlier centuries in both the Kessel paintings and the Palazzo Farnese can be most closely linked to the exterior allegorical dormer groups of the “four continents” on City Hall (Figures 24-27). Through their massive scale and locations above the main, axial entrances to the City Hall, they are highly conventional, visible, and readable. They signal as “democratic objects,” in Alexander Nemerov’s terminology, for their assumed clarity of meaning, as well as their size, but also for a supposed simplification of the message they project to those viewing the building from a distance.17 These dormers, unlike the sculptural groups in the crypt below, dominate the cityscape and could be seen daily by those who did not live or work near City Hall, as the enormous building bisects two main arteries of the city. To

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see the sculptures in the crypt space, however, though publicly accessible as well, necessitated the viewer to move not just near City Hall but also through it, and through the crypt space itself.

The dormers’ cardinal orientations match the global representations of the imagery: the north for the peoples of Europe, south for the peoples of Africa, west for the peoples of America and east for the peoples of Asia, as in the crypt. By virtue of their locations each group could only be viewed individually, and the relationship between the allegorical continental groups is not immediately clear to those encountering them for the first time. In contrast, the crypt’s usage to employ a single, unified allegorical theme with all four continental groups simultaneously visible indicates the intent to have those who would have passed through this public space respond differently to these sculptural works than to the continental dormers on the exterior façades, even while the projected meaning of the allegories was related.

The relatively confined space of the crypt allows those who pass through it to experience the sculpture, and in turn its ideological message, more intimately than they would in any other space in City Hall. While the crypt is oriented to encourage visitors to pass through on a north/south path, the large center columns are given a wide berth of space, enabling the viewer to observe the continental figures above from any direction he or she wishes. With the exception of William Penn on top of the tower, no other figural work is presented by Calder in this way at City Hall: visually
accessible from all angles. Through this similarity, viewers would be reminded of the hierarchy of scale and of place within the tower vertically—*William Penn* would stand in for Philadelphia’s place in the world atop all the continents in the tower below. This physical hierarchy was not unique to Philadelphia architecture of this era, as the figure of *Freedom* gracing the dome of completed federal Capitol addition in D.C. might similarly have been intended to demonstrate the driving force overshadowing the work of the representatives of the states represented in the chambers below.

The northern entrance to City Hall was designated for foreign dignitaries and local civic leaders; it was the means of access to the political space of Conversation Hall, in the tower directly above the crypt (Figure 28), as well as being a public entrance to the building and its courtyard. In addition to its location along the northern entrance, the crypt is situated at the base of the tower. The building’s cornerstone lays exposed in the northeast corner of the space (Figure 5), and though no records exist to document the numbers of visitors who came to view it, the space was lit day and night, indicating at the very least a hope for substantial tourism to the site at all hours.\(^{18}\) While there, these visitors would have encountered the “peoples” of the four quarters of the world on the column capitals depicted holding up the soaring tower above,

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\(^{18}\) While the lights currently located in the ceiling of the crypt were installed during the 1982 restoration of the tower, since July 4, 1874, the crypt has been continuously lit.
meant at its design to be the tallest structure in the world. As such, it is one of the most significant public spaces in City Hall, privileged by its foundational status, location and the exposed cornerstone on display within it. Calder’s sculpture in this space sits apart stylistically from common sculptural depictions of the four continents, as he uses both male and female figures, and a far greater number than was traditional in single allegory European sculptural models. Historically, when larger numbers of personifications were depicted, each represented a separate nation within the continent, but this is not true of the sculptures in the crypt. In addition, Calder’s choice to have the figures relatively unencumbered by additional symbols or garments, and truncated at the waist was very unusual.

Do these sculptures project their meaning to the broadest possible audience, as do those on the exterior of the building? No. However, the subtle reinforcement of the message of those global, racialized sculptures in the crypt would have been interpreted as a doubling by some viewers. Although this space was in theory for rich and poor alike, the way the viewer would have encountered the space and the sculpture would obviously have differed based on race and social class. Without any knowledge of European artistic precedent, much of the imbued meaning of power and global

19 The tower remains the tallest masonry load bearing structure in the world, at 546 feet, but was intended to be the tallest building in the world. Before construction finished, both the Washington Monument and the Eiffel Tower eclipsed Philadelphia City Hall in height.
strength may have been lost on some viewers of the crypt space—and people of
certain ethnicities may well have viewed the racialized imagery in unintended ways.
While it is not possible to describe an “ordinary viewer” for these sculptures, it is most
likely that those passing through the space, if not coming to view the cornerstone,
would have lived or worked near City Hall.20

Another result of the space’s location in the base of the tower is the relative
silence of the crypt, even when occupied by many people. The crypt is buffered from
the sounds of traffic and the hustle of the great city beyond by incredibly thick walls.
The space, therefore, is not only imbued with meaning by virtue of its proximity to the
cornerstone and location in the tower, but also by the shift in both light and sound one
encounters when entering the space from either functioning entrance, the north from
the Northern Arcade, or the south from the City Hall courtyard. The shift into this
different space is therefore also marked audibly, not simply visually.

The sculptural groups of peoples atop the four main columns in this space are
marked with a great many similarities, in large part as a result of the way these capitals

20 Contemporary literature, as well as articles from newspapers collected meticulously
by Samuel C. Perkins about City Hall and those who came to view it as tourists and as
Philadelphians, does not reveal a special fascination with the crypt space itself, so it is
less likely that tourism to see these particular sculptural groups was usual. See Perkins,
Scrapbooks, for a better sense of the breadth and depth of late nineteenth century
coverage of the New City Hall.
were created. Each column depicts four male and four female figures that each follow identical compositions. They alternate sex within each continent; the female figures appear on the northwestern, southwestern, southeastern and northeastern axes, while the male figures appear on the primary axes: north, south, east, and west. The male figures face outward, confronting the viewer, while the female figures are shown in profile or with their backs to the viewer. The bodies of these figures are truncated in an unusual place: below the waist, the only instance of such figures in the City Hall sculptural program.

The number four—the number of men and women on column capitals, the cardinal directions the chamber is built around, the number of large columns, the number of entrances and exits to the space, the number of keystone animal heads, and the corners of the space, to name a few—functions to cut the space into equal portions and to produce a sense of rationality in the allegory and how a visitor would

21 Calder’s carvers used the same figural models for each capital, only inserting new versions of sculpted ethnographic heads for each continent, seen by the plaster molds he creates for the group. The same is true of the small putti figures that surround them—the model for the figure of each is the same, though they differ in their ethnographically depicted facial features and head shape. While this may have been a choice to save time, or resources, it seems unlikely that Calder would have taken these shortcuts, particularly as the funding for the sculpture of City Hall was largely unregulated and there seemed to be no financial trouble in the late 1870s. Additionally, as it appears that Calder did not re-use the same models within other allegorical sculpture schemes at City Hall, the choice to do so here also stands apart within his work and indicates that the true import of these sculptures lies in the differences between the sculpted facial features.
experience it (Figure 29). The directionality of the crypt space on a north/south axis also splits the four main columns across an east/west axis, and thus divides the Europe and America capitals from those of Asia and Africa. Four was a heavily used number in decorative schemes for obvious reasons. The 1779 English translation of Ripa’s *Iconologica* groups the first volume in categories mostly based on the number four: the four humors, seasons, great rivers of the world, winds, and continents. This number is also paralleled in the chamber directly above, Conversation Hall, and the chamber directly above that, a City Council Caucus Room containing allegorical sculpted keystones depicting personifications of the four seasons, which Calder designed around the same time as the crypt (Figures 30-33).

Unlike the other allegorical sculpture in the tower, the sculpture in the crypt is high relief. The figures seem almost freestanding from the columns themselves, which creates a sense of drama and movement in the space of the crypt, visually ushering along the viewer from one capital to the next. The naturalistic figures on the center columns are clearly the most important group in the space, and the shape of the ceiling and the leading curved angles of the sections also draw the viewer’s eye directly to

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22 This space was originally intended to be an extension of the political/public space of Conversation Hall, on the first floor of the tower. The staircase that originally connected the two floors was structurally unsound and much too heavy for the space. It was therefore removed less than a year after its installation, to impede any significant damage to the tower itself. From that time onward the two spaces have functioned independently and remain unconnected.
these capitals. The choice of red granite in a space that was otherwise lined with cooler colored stones additionally directs the viewers to these columns and the figures atop them.

The figural heads on the “Europe” capital (Figure 7) generally resemble classicized statuary: the male figures have long flowing beards and the female figure have similarly generalized classical hairstyles. The choice to model these figures in this way, in direct contrast with the specific figures Calder uses in the exterior “Europe” dormer above the main northern entrance to City Hall, such as an armored explorer, may be a result of the popularity at that time of generalized neoclassical sculpture. However, using the prevailing trend for the European capital indicates in some ways the re-occurring Euro/American-centricity implicit in the use of this form of continental allegory.23

The capital of the “America” column shows ethnographic, stylized forms of male and female Indians (Figure 9). In comparison to the relatively neutral faces depicted on the “Europe” capital, these figures’ faces seem to depict melancholy, or at least stronger emotion, as a result of more deeply creased, larger facial features. This may be read in relation to contemporary history as resignation or even defeat: while

23 Also, the choice to frame the exposed cornerstone in the crypt with the “Europe” capital may indicate a connection between American strength and European precedent, linking the two “continents” physically in the space as well.
there was continuing turbulence and inequality in American Indian-Anglo American race relations nationally, the heated relocation of American Indians was long past.\textsuperscript{24} This stylistic choice, subtle as it may be, is particularly powerful in a public location of a governmental building, and contrasts sharply with artistic depictions of the previous decades. For example, Vivian Fryd has analyzed how the depiction of American Indians in the federal Capitol building as alternatively bloodthirsty or peaceful was intertwined with Congressional political interests, at times even helping spur legislation.\textsuperscript{25} The depiction of Indian figures here is in keeping with political thought at the time, crystallized in writings and paintings by the artist George Catlin, that the Indians were a dying race and that depiction of them would preserve their heritage. While there is no evidence that indicates Calder’s depiction of Indians on City Hall was similarly motivated, and may have simply been echoing the current sculptural trends of depictions of American Indians, their repeated depiction on Philadelphia City Hall in this manner is curious.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} The Indian Removal Act was formally passed into law under President Andrew Jackson in 1830.

\textsuperscript{25} See Fryd, \textit{Art and Empire}, 9-61.

\textsuperscript{26} This topic is worth exploring further, though the perimeters of this thesis do not allow for it here. For an excellent discussion of potential “racialization” of buildings and the contemporary mindset of the Philadelphia public, see Martin Berger, \textit{Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 81-121. His discussion of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, mere steps from City Hall and built at the same time, is illustrative and would serve as
Similarly, the column capital depicting “Asia” shows stylized ethnographic figures of Far Eastern faces with long mustaches and headpieces to suggest their origin (Figure 8). Philadelphia, during the time of construction of City Hall, had substantial immigration from Asia, and the city’s growing “Chinatown” was located mere blocks away from City Hall on Market Street. This growing immigrant population in the 1870s and 1880s would surely not have escaped Calder and his carvers, though these Chinese Americans would not have constituted part of the workforce erecting the new City Hall. In a gift book of photographs of the plaster models that Calder had made for City Hall from John McArthur, Jr. to Samuel C. Perkins, now housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Asian capital sculptures that were used as the crypt capital models were meticulously labeled near the time of the book’s completion. The word “Mongolians” written under these photographs indicates that a good starting off point for teasing out further the intricacies of race, space, and place in these allegorical column capitals in the crypt.

27 For further study, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Temple University Urban Archives, both in Philadelphia, hold a wealth of primary source documentation on the formation of and life within Philadelphia’s Chinatown.

28 The majority of the workforce constructing the new City Hall was of Scottish descent by explicit choice of the men in charge of the labor, with a few Irishmen and Welsh allowed to join them. This was a result of the stronghold of power of Scottish craftsmen in Philadelphia at this time, and at City Hall in particular, and has not yet been explored in any depth in scholarly writings about the city’s architectural history. Three of the major players in the construction of City Hall, and all those intricately
Calder, or McArthur, viewed these figures as ethnographic types from a very specific Asian locale, and complicates the seemingly generalized view that Calder seems to take with the other three continental allegory columns in the crypt.

The capitals of the “Africa” columns show particularly expressive facial carving; the example of the central male figure shown in Figure 10 is smiling and seems pleasant. This choice may well be linked to the history of depiction of African Americans in nineteenth century American painting and sculpture, furthering the trope of the “smiling negro” by its use here. While Philadelphia had for its entire history boasted one of the largest free black communities in the country, it seems that Calder was depicting a universal “black figure” more in line with traditional European depictions of allegories of Africa, not a specific one commenting on racial tensions or relations in Philadelphia at this time. The racial overtones present in the ethnographic features of many of these column capitals do not seem to have been involved with the building’s craft were Scottish by birth, including John McArthur, Jr., the main marble contractors, the Struthers brothers, and Alexander Milne Calder.

created with the intent of pointed social commentary, though contemporary ideologies of race are seen here in many ways.

By utilizing putti in this space, Calder is drawing upon the established depiction of the four continents, but in a new way. Peter Paul Rubens’ c. 1615 painting, *The Four Continents*, depicts three golden-haired putti in the foreground playing with a crocodile, while personifications of the four continents mingle in the middle ground (Figure 34). Other examples of early depictions of putti within paintings of allegories of the four continents abound in Kessel’s 1664-66 series depicting personifications of each continent in wunderkammern (Figures 20-23). In the central panel of each, a male and female figure is shown with racialized putti and animals playing around them. These depictions of “parental” allegories of the continents with associated putti is very rare in sculpture and did not exist elsewhere in America at the time of the completion of Philadelphia City Hall. While Calder’s racialized putti are not new, his use of them on pilaster capitals, separated from yet in dialogue with the “adult” personifications, seems to be unique.

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30 While a few small continental putti figurines created by the Meissen factory of Germany in the seventeenth century survive, they were intended exclusively as a series of four putti, with two continents per figurine and with no associated “adult” continental personifications. Also, as small decorative porcelains, their use and possible influence is not comparable to similarly themed allegorical sculptural works displayed on governmental buildings.
Interestingly, the racialized putti capitals vary in size based on location, the corner or along a wall, and the placement of these figures does not correlate to the directional maxims by which the keystones and larger columns seem to be guided (Figure 29). In this way, the putti are “mixed” within the crypt, and do not seem to fit into the rigid pattern of fours that defines the rest of the space. There are four groups of “American” putti, three of “African” and “European” putti, and only two groups of “Asian” putti. The choice to depict greater numbers of the “American” putti when the system of fours could have again allowed for the illusion of equality, with three groupings of racialized putti for each “continent,” again indicates Calder’s favoring of depictions of America in this set of continental figures. Additionally, the placement of the “American” putti flanking both sides of the southern entrance to the space also reveals the favoring of those figures. When moving through the crypt space from the north, the political entrance and also the most reasonable entrance for those entering from outside City Hall, the viewer would be facing these putti directly, with no other pilasters visible.

The agricultural symbols surrounding the base of each column capital—showing the grain or associated produce of each “continent,” would have signified to viewers that these peoples were meant to symbolize different areas of the world, as the use of these fruits and vegetables was standard in allegorical sculpture. In Rubens’s painting, the male allegorical figures each wear wreathes linked to their continent’s
agriculture, and Calder employs fruits, vegetables and grains on his exterior continental dormers as well, as he had at the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia earlier in his career, and as did sculptors on column capitals at the nation’s new Capitol building in Washington.

Like the common depiction of regional grains and regionally resonant production—such as employing the tobacco leaf or the corn cob to represent America—regional beasts were typically associated with traits of the allegories of the four continents and were integrated into nearly all artistic production utilizing this allegory. In the 1779 English translation of the *Iconologica*, under the description of Europe, Ripa mentions cattle in conjunction with fertility and plenty, and the owl as symbolizing Europe’s intellect and “superiority above all other parts of the world.”

For a description of the “emblematical figure of Asia,” Ripa mentions the camel as an animal of great service, and native to Asia, but does not denote symbolic value for it. Africa is here most closely associated with beasts: “crowned with the trunk of an elephant…and a lion by her side, these sort of animals being natives in that part of the

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31 See Cesare Ripa, *Iconologica*. Compiled and translated by George Richardson (London: G. Scott, 1779), a facsimile of the first edition, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor, M.I.: University Microfilms International, 1980), 31. Bronze owls designed by Calder on the railing surrounding the cornerstone in the crypt might therefore be linked not just with wisdom, as owls often symbolize in Western art, but also with superior intellect and worldly dominance, which would be especially resonant for the building, its Commissioners, and Philadelphia in this area of the structure.
globe: she holds a scorpion in her left hand…[which] alludes to the quantity of venomous creatures that abound in Africa.”

Finally, America is associated with a “lizard, which abounds in that country, is of such an enormous size, and of such fierceness that it not only devours other animals but frequently attacks the inhabitants. The moose deer is also a notable animal in that part of the world and may with propriety be introduced.”

While over time the beasts associated with each continent varied, most often personifications of America were depicted alongside an alligator, a bison, a bear or a moose; for Asia, alongside an elephant; for Africa alongside a camel, an elephant, a tiger, a scorpion or a lion; and for Europe, alongside a bull or a horse. In the crypt, a grizzly bear is associated with America, a bull with Europe, an elephant with Asia and a tiger with Africa, following general allegorical norms, if not Ripa’s explicit instructions.

While, to some extent, Calder utilizes standard allegorical themes, his choices also reveal a shift from normal Euro-centric usages of the “four continents.” Positing America’s rightful global place as the central one, the allegory here might also hint at possible conflict and hierarchies within an ever-diversifying Philadelphia. Similarly,

32 Ripa, *Iconologica*, 1779, 32.

33 Ibid., 33.

34 The choice of the tiger over another African beast may well be linked with Calder’s penchant for cats. See Butterfield, “The Cats on City Hall,” 440.
Calder undercuts traditional readings of this allegory by endowing some of the main personifications within the crypt with untraditional facial markers, such as the America column, and confuses the global hierarchy by outnumbering European putti with American ones. These tensions in the crypt, and in the program itself, could be symbolic of the anxieties of a city and nation in the face of great change: a shift from the global dominance of Western Europe to that of America, one the Commissioners may have been eager to use in the sculptural program of City Hall.
THE WORLD AT THE CENTER OF THE CITY

Philadelphia was fast becoming an unrivaled American center of production in the later nineteenth century: textiles, rolled cigars and transportation machinery such as steam engines, just to name a few, flowed from the city’s railroad hubs and docks. Gary Nash has stated that Philadelphia’s workshops and businesses “turned out more goods than any other American city” at this time.\(^{35}\) Spurred in great part by Philadelphia’s location along the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers as well as its proximity to vast reserves of coal, steel, and newly discovered petroleum, these small workshops began exporting goods all over the nation, and all over the world. Perhaps the growth of industry after the end of the Civil War, coupled with an influx of immigrants and a renewed national recognition following the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 reminded Philadelphia’s leaders of the city’s earlier prosperous era: the late colonial period—a time when Philadelphia was the nation’s capital, the center of finance, and the largest urban area in the United States.

As the economy continued to grow, the need for cheaply produced goods coincided with high immigration and an availability of cheap labor. Racial tensions

\(^{35}\) Nash, *First City*, 287.
between new immigrants from Ireland and the free black population escalated, with black workers vying with the Irish for labor jobs and often losing what little work existed for them in the city. By 1890, the social historian W.E. B. DuBois documented in The Philadelphia Negro nearly 40,000 African Americans in a city of over a million inhabitants, a seemingly small part of the population, but the largest population living in any Northern city at that time. Problems on the western frontier also found their way into Philadelphia discussions—Sitting Bull had recently defeated General Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn. It was in this context of prosperity and racial tension, both within the city and nationally, that the sculptural work on City Hall by Milne Calder was being modeled and carved.

Perhaps spurred by the many technological innovations showcased at the Centennial, the City Hall Commissioners published guidebooks to the building with pointed commentary about American ideas, genius and supremacy:

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36 See Ibid., 167-175 for more on this particular racial clash in the Philadelphia working class.


38 The annihilation of US troops by the Sioux Indians took place in late June 1876. News of the battle didn’t reach Philadelphia until early July of that year.
The whole exterior is bold and effective in outline, and rich in detail, being elaborated with highly ornate columns, pilasters, pediments, cornices, enriched windows, and other appropriate adornments, wrought in artistic forms, expressing American ideas and developing American genius.\(^{39}\)

The link to “American ideas,” “wrought in artistic forms” in this guidebook indicates that the Commissioners viewed the statues in City Hall as didactic demonstrations of “American genius.” Whether this genius was fostered in those who worked within its walls, those who viewed these works, or those who created them, or all three, was not quite clear.

As for fostering talent and genius in the building itself, two major architectural contests were held for the design of City Hall. The first took place in 1860, and the jury was headed by the architect Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887). The contest was won by a local architect of Scottish birth who had trained under Walter—John McArthur, Jr. As a result of the decision to erect the building in Centre Square instead of the location intended in the 1860 contest, another competition was held in 1869, the jury of which was also headed by Walter. McArthur again won.\(^{40}\) Michael Lewis has argued that while the prize to design the building went to McArthur both times through these contests, it was his teacher and future “assistant” Walter who influenced


much of the architectural planning of City Hall. Walter’s knowledge of other monumental government buildings, most notably the dome of the new federal Capitol addition, which he designed, was no doubt helpful in assisting McArthur to integrate a sculptural program into the architecture.

By Calder’s account, he was hired by John McArthur, Jr. in 1872 to be in charge of the modeling of the building’s decorative sculpture. Though neither a contract nor correspondence exists today to indicate what McArthur might have tasked Calder to create specifically, Perkins maintained in letters that Calder worked in close collaboration with McArthur, as was the norm at this time. In a letter dated December 26, 1883 to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Perkins states that “all the sculpture and ornamental work [at City Hall] is from plaster models prepared on

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41 For more about the intricacies of their working relationship, and the possible favoritism of the committee towards McArthur, see ibid. It has been suggested by several historians, Lewis included, that the label of “assistant” for Walter, one of the leading architects in the nation at the time of construction for City Hall, would be more akin to an “advisor” or “consultant” for the building by today’s standards.

42 *William Penn* was not the original figure intended for the top of the Philadelphia City Hall tower. Rather, a Greek-goddess like figure, perhaps Columbia or Liberty, was planned in a scheme eerily similar to the Capitol building dome’s crowning allegorical sculpture, *Freedom*.

the ground under the immediate supervision of the architect." Though the architect’s early sketches for the building do not depict much of the allegorical sculpture now integrated into the exterior of City Hall, his later sketches and plans seem to add increasingly more figural and decorative ornamentation to the building. It might not be too much of a stretch, therefore, to believe that the sculptural program’s extensiveness, if not its themes, was in part due to a close working relationship between Calder and McArthur.

Based on the City’s pay records, it is clear that Calder was not an employee on weekly payroll. He did however receive pay, as publicized by the local papers, which indicates that at one time a contract between Calder and the City must have existed. While it is similarly unclear why Calder was selected by McArthur as the


45 See *Payroll Records, The New Public Buildings*, Files of the Commissioners for the Erection of the New Public Buildings, 1881-1901. Milne Calder’s name does not appear on the extant payroll records housed in the Archives of the City of Philadelphia, though they are incomplete. Strangely, only one of his assistants appears regularly with the title “modeler,” though none of his other assistants or carvers appear in the payroll records.

46 The *Philadelphia Inquirer* recorded Calder’s appropriated funds seven times over the years 1875-1882, without any regularity, each time noting it was for “plaster models” or labor and materials, and generally averaging $450.00. The total paid to Calder and his assistants over these years, including the cost of materials, was at the very least $2,914.84.
sculptor for City Hall, his work at First Presbyterian Church, located at 21st and Walnut Streets in Philadelphia, may have led to his commission. Calder trained in Edinburgh at the Royal Scottish Institution under the sculptor John Rhind (1828-1892), father of American sculptor John Massey Rhind (1860-1936). In addition to this formal training in Scotland, records indicate that when he arrived in Philadelphia in 1868, Calder enrolled in beginner’s drawing at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and took classes there intermittently for the following twenty years.

Calder’s carved capitals both on the interior and exterior of the building, seemingly of flora and fauna but harboring symbolic references about the tenets of Presbyterianism, reveal much of the same fascination with birds, gryphons, and local plants as do many parts of the City Hall sculpture. While the sculptural program at First Church was carefully mapped out by the church’s leaders, the humor and detail in many of the column capitals indicate that Calder injected much of his own artistic sensibilities into the work. The church was built from 1869-1871 and all sculpture on the sandstone capitals was carved in situ during those years. As the largest congregation of Presbyterians in the city, the new church building may have attracted attention from the Presbyterian lay minister McArthur, and/or from the Struthers brothers, the marble contractors and official builders for City Hall and prominent members of this church. This recognition may in turn have garnered Calder the contract for the sculptural program at the new City Hall.

Per correspondence between the author and the Royal Scottish Academy, January 21, 2010 and the author and the Royal Archives of Scotland, January 24, 2010. The Royal Scottish Institution is not to be confused with the Royal Scottish Academy, which functioned independently. The RSI was a government sponsored school in Edinburgh, known at the time Calder would have been a student, from 1865-67, as the Trustee’s Academy.

See Records of Enrollment, 1868-1888, archives of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
artistic training he received suggests that Calder would have been familiar with Western artistic norms with regard to employment of allegory and personifications, such as Cesare Ripa’s influential book, *Iconologica*, before beginning his program at City Hall.

Calder’s method in creating the City Hall sculpture was typical for the late nineteenth century. While he did the sculptural modeling himself, Calder employed carvers or casters to create the final statuary in stone or bronze. It is not known where Calder and his assistants labored prior to October 1877, but he was already modeling and receiving payments from the Commissioners before he moved into a southwest corner studio in the basement at City Hall at that time. He remained in this studio until he finished his work at City Hall in 1893. The painter James P. Kelley (1854-1893), known for his from-life depictions of artists working at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, captured Calder in the studio at work with his assistants (Figure 35).^{50} Calder’s main assistant, James G. C. Hamilton, depicted by Kelley in the foreground with a brown beard, would cast plaster replicas of Calder’s clay models. Using these plaster models, the carvers would duplicate Calder’s works through pointing. The carving of the allegorical keystone and capital sculpture in the crypt likely began in

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^{50} Photographs in unbound albums at the Archives of the City of Philadelphia confirm that Kelley was depicting a realistic view of the studio, and naturalistic likenesses of both Calder and his main assistants. Calder is the figure in the background with a beard and a hat, not the figure in the foreground, as many assume.
1877, after the stone faces of the surrounding walls were installed and placement of the column bases occurred in 1876. An undated photograph of the ‘model’ “Europe” column (Figure 36) survives, indicating that the capitals were not carved in situ, but rather in Calder’s studio. The same column can be seen in the background of Kelley’s painting.

Though Calder pulls much from art historical representations of the four continents and European sculptural models, his high relief statuary in the crypt may also owe a debt to another public building he is thought to have visited under request by Perkins: the New York State Capitol in Albany. Letters from Perkins to McArthur on August 13 and 14, 1875 show that McArthur and members of the Building Commission went to Albany, with expenses paid by the City of Philadelphia, to see the progress on the building. It is probable that he took the main members of his team for City Hall, Calder among them. It is possible that Calder may have encountered sculpted capitals such as those in Figure 37, with ethnographic American Indian heads topping columns and other figural work depicted on the capitals below. As his eventual stylistic choices in the crypt indicate a break in many ways from known

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51 Letters from Samuel Perkins describing installation and sending out requests for proposals from the City indicate that both were in situ by late 1876 or early 1877. See Perkins, Letterbooks, Volume II, Letters 71-213.

depictions of the four continents, it is possible he may have borrowed a contemporary
civic building style for his own purposes.

A known example of public sculptural allegories of the four continents in the
United States extant prior to Calder’s sculptures for City Hall are Randolph Rogers’
(1825-1892) door frames on the Capitol building in Washington D.C. (Figures 38a-e).
These allegorical figures frame the western entrance, which leads to the central
Rotunda and serves as the main entrance for members of the House and the Senate.
The doors, also designed by Rogers, depict the life of Christopher Columbus in
celebration of America’s, and Europe’s, history. Modeled on Ghiberti’s Gates of
Paradise in Florence, the grand doors and continental allegory with strong colonial
themes were not coincidental, though the depiction of the four continents was not part
of originally contracted subject matter for the doors.53 An allegory of national and
worldly power surrounding the entrance for the nation’s lawmakers, would, however,
have been intentional on Rogers’ part. Whether Calder knew of these sculptures, there
is no doubt Thomas U. Walter would have been aware of the doors and their

53 Vivien Green Fryd, Art & Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the United States
Capitol, 1815-1860 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 126. For more on the
commission and symbolism of these doors, see Chapter 6. It is interesting to note that
it was Thomas U. Walter, then the architect of the dome to the new addition of the
Capitol, who suggested moving the doors to their current location outside the Rotunda
from their original installation between Statuary Hall and the House extension, in
1871.
allegorical significance for the Capitol. This knowledge, in turn, might have influenced McArthur’s and Calder’s sculptural choices at City Hall.

Calder and the Commissioners were drawing on recognizable and accessible allegories in the public space of City Hall—there is a long history of the depiction of the four continents in painting and the decorative arts, as well as in monumental sculpture and governmental buildings throughout Europe. Eric Gollannek has discussed the use of allegorical continental sculpture at the Bristol Exchange in England, and its ideological link to international trade and money exchange. As Gollannek argues, Bristol in the early eighteenth century was a naval leader for Britain, and this building was the first point of entry into the city as well as a center of trade. In this case, the continental allegories were linked to mercantile power, and European/British naval and trade dominance more specifically. Similarly, Philadelphia in the mid and late nineteenth century was a global textile and manufactory center—a hub in a different sense, but a no less significant one for the economy of the city. The utilization of these powerful global allegories, therefore, would also have been in line with Philadelphia’s burgeoning national influence.

This ideological link between economic and cultural power through these allegorical figures would have been apparent to someone with Calder’s schooling in emblems and symbols, as well as to those on the committee who had attended the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Fairmount Park. There, dormers very similar to the later “four continent” dormers at City Hall, hung in the exhibition buildings near certain nations or nation groups (Figures 39, 40). While the Centennial Exhibition was ostensibly showcasing the many nations of the world without bias, the hegemonies that were present at City Hall were also present in this grand international display of industrial and economic might—that America and the Western European nations produced first rate goods worthy of display, and that the goods of nations of Asia and Africa were of lesser import and quality. Though ostensibly represented equally, the areas of the fair that the artwork of each area of the world was displayed, for example, varied greatly. American work from Japan, China, and other non-European nations was confined to a separate building.55

Perhaps even less subtly than the division of national pavilions, regional and national racial tensions were also on display at the Exhibition’s stalls. The

Smithsonian Institution mounted a display of American Indians as reformed savages.\textsuperscript{56} There was a relative exclusion of images depicting or explaining African Americans’ role in Philadelphia, and the nation’s history, outside of occasional mentions of “happy slaves” as entertainment at dining areas.\textsuperscript{57} Thus, in mimicking an allegorical form used in the fair, the Commissioners and Calder reiterated racial and national ideas of superiority showcased at the Centennial in the City Hall sculptural program.

Another publicly accessible work Calder helped create during the year before he immigrated to the United States showcased the allegories of the four continents—the National Albert Memorial in London (Figure 41).\textsuperscript{58} The monument to Prince Albert, erected by Queen Victoria in the wake of his death in 1861, displays sculptural groups representing the four continents, situated at the base of the steps leading down from the centrally located commemorative sculpture of the Prince Consort. Commissioned from four different sculptors, the continents were meant to indicate Albert’s global social impact (Figures 42-45) and particularly reference his

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\textsuperscript{56} See Nash, \textit{First City}, 267.
\textsuperscript{57} See ibid., 270-71 for mention of the few instances of African American presence at the fair, mainly as “happy slaves.”
\end{flushleft}
involvement with the Crystal Palace World’s Fair that took place in London in 1851.\textsuperscript{59} A contemporary British critic of the memorial remarks that the sculptural group of Europe in particular was meant to indicate the “influence which our [European] quarter of the globe has exercised over the others.”\textsuperscript{60} The crowned female figure atop the bull was a personification of England, with France, a newly unified Italy, and Germany at her feet.\textsuperscript{61} It is possible that this monument’s larger allegorical program, which in its entirety is very similar to Calder’s final design at City Hall, crystallized for Calder how and with which artistic symbols a sculptor might relay global prominence and cultural power to an audience.

The sculptural group depicting \textit{America} from the Albert Memorial, by John Bell (Figure 44) was duplicated in terracotta and displayed prominently at the entrance to Memorial Hall in Philadelphia’s Centennial Exhibition of 1876 (Figure 46).\textsuperscript{62} This


\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 242.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{62} See Peter Sellin, “The Centennial.” In \textit{Sculpture of a City}, Fairmount Park Art Association, 78-94, 80. It should be noted that the statues are no longer extant on Memorial Hall in Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park, and their current whereabouts are unknown.
sculpture was the first thing fairgoers would have encountered when entering the “Fine Art” area of the Centennial, and both its massive scale and impressive position in the building indicated the importance of the United States and its art in this World’s Fair. Furthering the theme of continental allegory, atop the building, surrounding a monumental bronze sculpture of Columbia, were depictions of the four continents by German-born sculptor A.J.M. Müller.63 Calder notes in his autobiography that several of his sculptural works were also shown in the Centennial.64 Letters between Samuel C. Perkins, Building Commission President, and John McArthur, City Hall’s architect, following the Exhibition explicitly state that Perkins wanted the “plaster modeler” [Calder] to submit as many “sketches,” or plaster models, as possible to the director of the Permanent International Centennial Exhibition in Memorial Hall for display.65 It couldn’t have escaped Calder’s notice, therefore, that this imagery was shown at Philadelphia’s Memorial Hall alongside his own work, even after the end of the Centennial Exhibition.

Though the ostensible purpose of the sculpture on the Albert Memorial in London and that of Philadelphia City Hall differed in many ways, a highly visible place was given in both monuments to the allegories of the four continents. As such,

63 Ibid.


the viewers of each series of works were able to respond to these sculptures differently than to the rest of the program, similarly to Roger’s employment of these allegories in Washington, D. C. The allegorical figures or groups function to frame each of these spaces: on the Albert Memorial, as in the dormers above the entrances of City Hall, these allegorical groups of figures dominate visual and physical entrance to the spaces, asserting socio-political and racial hegemonies as the viewer enters. The same is true of the crypt space in City Hall, as keystones relating to the allegory frame each entrance to the space, and allegorical figures line the ceilings.

The unique feel of the crypt is created in part by the nearness of the viewer to the sculpture, the darkness of the room, though lit, and the artistic choices made in creating the sculptural assemblage in that space. These elements, coupled with the charged political meanings present in its location at the center of the physical seat of government and justice for the city, creates in the crypt doubly resonant assertions of power. In some ways, the space serves as a reiteration of the ideologies of global power and strength seen on the exterior dormers. However, the crypt also contains an internal assertion, both architecturally for the space and metaphorically for the city. Showing the city’s strength to aid itself by harnessing the might of the “world” to hold it up, through powerful-looking allegorical figures physically supporting the tower above, metaphorically demonstrating how manufactory from the city to all parts of the world bolstered Philadelphia’s economic prosperity, exposes many of the nuances and
contradictions present in this space of the pairing of a local civic building with global aspirations.
CONCLUSION

Philadelphia will be again, as she first was, the real centre of finance, of commerce, and wealth. She is at the head of the mechanic arts and of manufacturing, and she has ever led in refinement, in science, and in jurisprudence. The material supremacies which left her will return, and those graces and glories which she has ever had will never leave her...66

Such were the hopes of the Commissioners, boldly stated in the pamphlets they printed in 1880. It was reprinted many times by the Commissioners for the specific purpose of dispersal to national dignitaries in the United States, such as Theodore Roosevelt, as well as to global leaders. Perkins’s correspondence in the years after this pamphlet’s publication show a particular anxiety to get it in the hands of worldly men, and to have recognition for both the building and the city. In an 1881 letter to Lars Westergaard, then the consul for Austria-Hungary, who was in Philadelphia aboard an Austrian man-of-war, Perkins expresses his desire to personally show him the “New Public Buildings” and encloses several copies of the 1880 pamphlet.67 He sent similar letters, with at least five copies of the pamphlet each, to prominent men in New York,


Washington, D.C., England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. He directly contacted the Chinese ambassador to the United States to express his profound joy in hearing that the ambassador felt “gratification and admiration” when visiting City Hall in 1882.68

Perkins’s hope to persuade international politicians and leaders to not only visit, but also share in his awe and love of this building, demonstrates how personal and how global the Commissioners’ intent was. The tensions present in the city, however, and in the nation at the time of the building’s erection reveal a doubling of the message imparted by the global allegorical figures, both high and low, near and far. The crypt space in particular exhibits, through its layout, location, and stylistic choices not simply a reassertion of the exterior continental sculptural groups but a separate message of the local ability to construct—machinery, sculpture, buildings, and an ideological message built around all three.

Philadelphia was a strong economic center in the country and in the world when the architect John McArthur, Jr. drew plans for a new City Hall. With each passing year, more sculpture was added to the exterior of the “marble monster,” eventually dominating the physical and visual landscape of the city. The choice of the four continent sculptures, on the mansard dormers above each entrance, and especially in the area of the building known as the “crypt,” helped the Commissioners project to the public ideas of Philadelphia’s and America’s socio-economic might.

68 Perkins, Letterbooks, Vols. III and IV.
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