Dossier, Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte (UAM)

Deadline: Mar 31, 2026

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Los obispos y la formación de saberes, entre espacios locales y globales. Promoción artística y coleccionismo en las iglesias catedrales (siglos XVI-XX).

The present dossier aims to examine how, between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries—that is to say, between an early and a more recent modernity—bishops became catalysts for major artistic initiatives, leaving their mark on their cathedral churches. The greater prominence of the figure of the bishop in the post-Tridentine period, together with the obligation to reside in their respective dioceses and their desire to ensure the perpetuation of their memory, often turned these prelates into patrons willing to engage the best artists. Well-versed and experienced in the language of power, the bishops used cultural promotion as an instrument of consensus, but also as an effective political vehicle at the service of the renewal of the Catholic Church. Among them, we find prominent theologians, jurists, intellectuals, collectors, geographers, proto-ethnographers, and others.

Over the past twenty five years, the academic community has devoted considerable attention to studying the various dimensions of episcopal patronage. Historians, art historians, anthropologists, theologians, and specialists from all branches of the humanities have analyzed the figures of bishops through a wide range of themes and different perspectives. Research on episcopal patronage has developed through numerous doctoral dissertations and journal articles that present specific case studies, sometimes focusing on local contexts. However, to understand such a complex phenomenon in all its nuances, it is necessary to encompass its international dimension, favoring a comparative vision across different territories.

The dossier's main object of study is the task of artistic patronage by bishops in a broad sense, considering that, through their mobility between dioceses and their geographical movements, these figures became powerful cultural mediators capable of fostering the circulation of images, artists, texts, ideas, cults, devotions, and other devotional practices. The aim is also to highlight their role as collectors and their promotion of decorative works on façades, chapels, altarpieces, sacristies and more. What effects did this cultural activity have on the dioceses? What reactions did it cause among members of the cathedral chapter and, more generally, the local elite? What reception was there (if any) among the laity?

The dossier aims to demonstrate the multidirectional nature of ecclesiastical promotion within a geographical framework that encompasses Catholic Europe, the Ibero-American world, and the Catholic presence in Africa and Asia, highlighting the political, social, artistic and religious ties that bound these territories. The goal is to create a collaborative project that will enable new contacts and dialogues across the oceans.

Submissions must correspond to an original and unpublished research that is not currently under review for publication in other journals or monographic studies. The accepted languages are Spanish, English, French, Italian, and Portuguese. The inclusion of references to the sources used in the development of the study will be valued favorably.

Please send an abstract (200–300 words) to the two coordinators of the dossier, together with a brief biography (150 words) of the author, by March 31, 2026.

Notification of acceptance will be communicated by April 15. Authors will submit the article (following the journal's editorial norms) before November 30, 2026.

For further information, please contact the coordinators:
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Reference:

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