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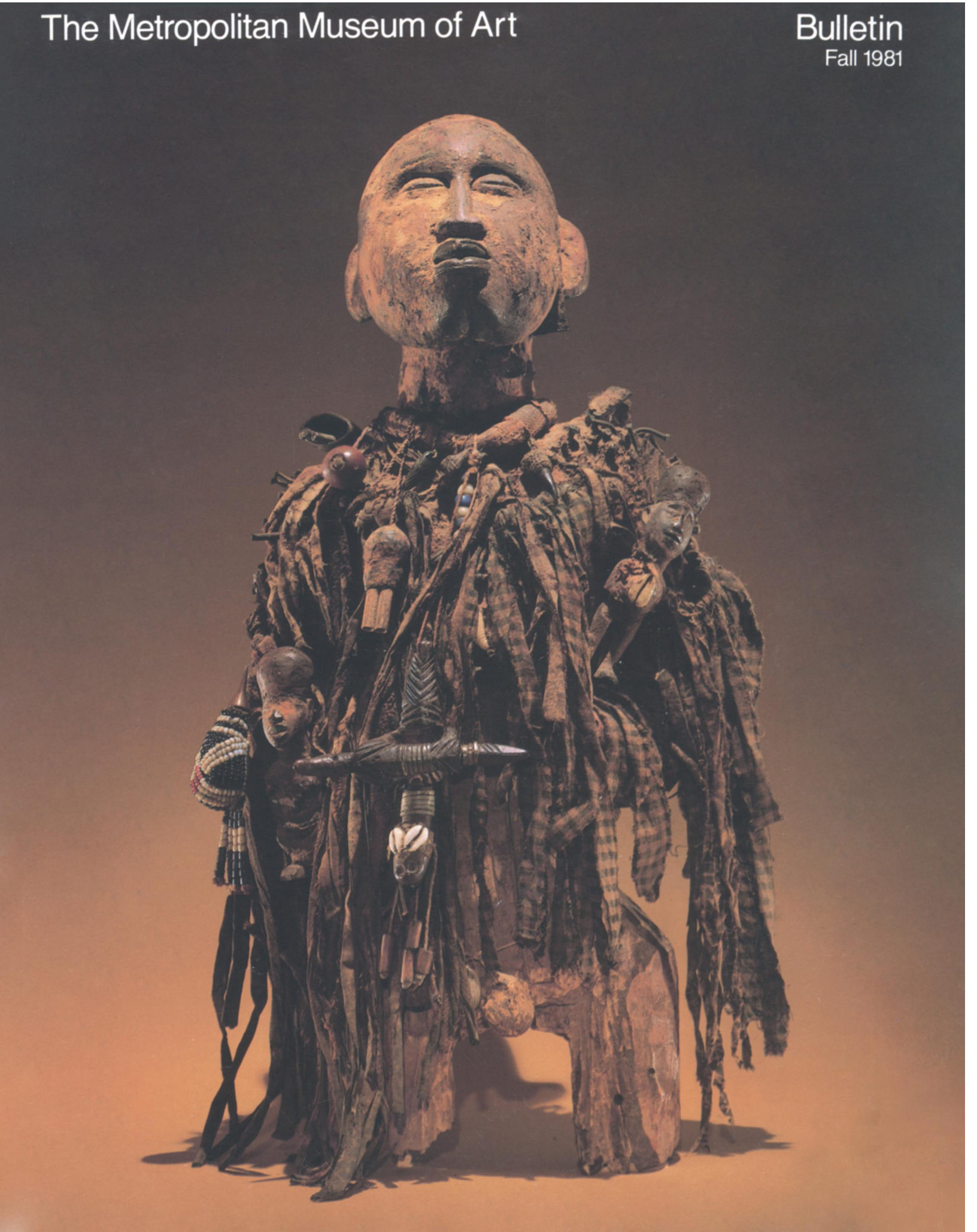

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

The Art of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas

Text by Douglas Newton
Photographs by Lee Boltin

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On the cover: The Kongo people of Zaire believed that this figure embodied a spirit possessing both healing and malevolent powers. The smaller figures attached are material records of each invocation or prayer to that spirit. The horns were filled with ingredients that could have been medicinal. **Inside covers:** A design of a single bird, repeated in rows facing in opposite directions and in several variations in color, is part of a panel decorating one corner of a mantle made by the Huari of Peru's south coast about A.D. 600–1000.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Philippe de Montebello

The opening of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing this winter constitutes a landmark for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which, with this addition, rounds out the presentation of all areas of its encyclopedic collections. The new wing makes available to the public the artistic achievements of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas and fulfills the goal of the Museum's founders to exhibit "objects illustrative of all the history of art in all its branches from the earliest beginnings to the present time." The great strength of the Metropolitan Museum lies in its comprehensiveness; few museums can offer a complete cross section of art history in one architectural entity.

Only recently have the arts of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas received the serious attention that they deserve, although the Metropolitan acquired its first holdings in these fields, Aztec stone reliefs, in the late nineteenth century. Despite the fact that the Museum did not establish a separate department to study and exhibit this art until 1969, several generous gifts in the 1960s and 1970s greatly enriched the collection: Nathan Cummings's group of about 600 Peruvian ceramics; Mrs. Alice K. Bache's Pre-Columbian gold objects, including some of the most important in the country; and Lester Wunderman's outstanding collection of Dogon art. In 1969 Nelson A. Rockefeller pledged the large Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection. Consisting of the Governor's personal objects and those of the Museum of Primitive Art (which he founded in association with René d'Harnoncourt in 1957), the collection was given in memory of his son Michael, who was lost during an expedition in 1961 while gathering Asmat art in New Guinea for the Museum of Primitive Art. In 1969 the Metropolitan reached an agreement with that museum to transfer to the Metropolitan both the smaller institution's collection and its library (now renamed The Robert Goldwater Library in honor of the first director of the Museum of Primitive Art) and to construct a special wing at the Metropolitan to house these new acquisitions. Sadly, Governor Rockefeller died in 1979 before he could see his unrivaled collection installed in the new wing.

The complex project of the construction and installation of this new wing has finally drawn to a conclusion, aided by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller family, and the Vincent Astor Foundation.

The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, featuring a fifty-foot-high gallery with a glass façade looking out onto Central Park, has been organized according to three geographic areas: Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas. The display and installation of their arts will encourage further study of these objects on aesthetic grounds, and the works themselves—ranging from six Bamana figures mounted before a carved Bamana door to huge Asmat "bisj," or ancestor, poles to beautifully sculpted bronzes from the royal altars of Benin to a Pre-Columbian treasury of ornaments from the major gold-working centers—form bridges to many other areas of the Museum's collections.

The Robert Goldwater Library is installed on the mezzanine of the new wing. Its extensive holdings of books and photographs are an invaluable research facility that will serve the general public as well as scholars.

The Museum's new wing is the achievement of a number of talented and dedicated individuals. The architectural scheme matching the breadth and magnificence of the wing for the Temple of Dendur is by Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates. Working closely with Douglas Newton, chairman of the department, in the realization of the installation were Stuart Silver, project director, and Clifford La Fontaine, design associate. They were aided by Julie Jones, curator, Susan Vogel, associate curator, and Kate Ezra, research assistant. Special thanks are due to Nobuko Kajitani, conservator of textiles, and to her staff, to Catherine Sease, associate conservator, and to Kathleen Eilersten, senior installer. I also want to thank other members of the Department of Primitive Art—namely Robert W. Young, James Dowtin, Donald Roberts, and Francesca Fleming.

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The Art of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection is composed of works of art from non-Western cultures, works that have often been collectively called primitive art. This is a compendious but somewhat misleading term; the art is not crude or rough, nor were the social or intellectual structures of the people who made it. What then is primitive art? Properly it is the art of those peoples who have remained until recent times at an early technological level, who have been oriented toward the use of tools but not machines. Immediately we can see that primitive culture encompasses an enormous proportion of the earth's surface and of its past and present populations. Much of Africa, parts of Asia, the continent of Australia, and all the islands of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia must be included. The whole of the New World, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, comes within its province. "Primitive" culture has been the major part of human experience.

The time spans involved are great. If a stumbling block to the understanding of primitive art has been the idea that it has no history, that notion has begun to be dispelled. Recent archaeological discoveries have disproved the long-held belief that the history of Oceania began a mere ten thousand years ago. Now we know that Australia was first inhabited at least forty to fifty thousand years ago, and the earliest works of art so far discovered there—rock engravings in Koonalda Cave in western Australia—are about twenty thousand years old. These were contemporary with the great Paleolithic cave paintings of Western Europe but are of an entirely different order. Naturalistic depiction of animal figures is nowhere to be seen; instead, there are groupings of abstract lines that seem to be in strategically significant areas of the cave. In northern Australia, petroglyphs—images pecked onto rock surfaces—in a style named after a site called Panaramittee depict bird and animal tracks and eggs, and are about seven thousand years old.

As the islands of Oceania became inhabited over periods of thousands of years—from about 50,000 B.C. to A.D. 900—other art traditions were begun. Although we can take it for granted that most of this early material has disappeared, a certain amount that is highly significant remains. There is the Lapita ware, so called after a site in New Caledonia where it was excavated, which, with its elegant and sophisticated patterning, was widespread throughout Melanesia from about 1200 B.C. to A.D. 650. Evidence of a complex social structure and of ritual beliefs is shown by the burial, at Retoka in the New Hebrides, of Roymata, a great chief who died about A.D. 1200 and was accompanied to his grave by an entourage of forty richly ornamented human sacrifices. Legends recalling the event guided archaeologists to the actual site in 1967. In New Zealand, elaborate whalebone and stone ornaments of the hunters of the moa, an ostrichlike bird now extinct, as well as fragments of textiles, weapons, and wood carvings that date from perhaps the fourteenth century and that have been recovered from swamps, bear witness to a long and changing series of art styles. Perhaps the most famous, and among the latest, pre-European art in the Pacific is the group of sixteenth-century stone colossi on Easter Island.

Africa's oldest surviving works of art are probably the rock paintings at Tassili and other sites in the Sahara; the dates of these are obscure. The paintings show masks and details of costumes now found in West Africa far to the south, suggesting that the present styles may be ancient in origin. In sub-Saharan Africa, the Iron Age culture of Nok in Nigeria, beginning around 900 B.C., left a quantity of terracotta sculpture. A tradition of ceramics was established in what is now Ghana much later, in the seventeenth century, and has remained an important aspect of art in West Africa down to the present day. Nigeria is particularly rich in memorials of African art of the past, partly because of the sophisticated use of enduring metals. Ninth-century bronzes of convoluted forms were excavated between 1958 and 1960 at Igbo-Ukwu in the Niger River delta; the brass heads of the rulers of Ife made in subsequent centuries and excavated between 1938 and 1957 are famous, as are the bronze heads, figures, and plaques of Benin, which were first seen by Portuguese visitors in the sixteenth century and looted from the city by the British in 1897. Many works in these styles were recently shown at the Metropolitan in the *Treasures from Ancient Nigeria* exhibition.

For each relic that has survived the long procession

The sixteenth-century saltcellar was discovered in Europe but carved in Africa to Portuguese specifications. The work reflects its origins, treating European subjects in a style related to Benin court ivories. The vessel is double-chambered and made in three parts. The hemispherical lid is missing.

through the millennia, countless thousands were destroyed. The record is more of hiatus than of history, but enough fragments remain to show evidence of some continuous stylistic traditions. We must abandon the idea, accepted until the late nineteenth century, that the primitive arts existed in a limbo outside of change, development, or decline. They were not static. No one today can think, as some nineteenth-century art historians seriously stated, that ancient Egyptian, Chinese, or Japanese art remained unchanged throughout their long histories. The same must be said of primitive arts.

For example, the history of Mexico, before Cortez landed in Veracruz in 1519, extended over nearly 3,300 years. Its land area is the equivalent of most of Europe. With monuments of stone, ceramic, and wood surviving from innumerable cultures, not to mention the massive architecture of the religious centers, the student of Mexican art is faced with a task equivalent to a survey of European art from Stonehenge to the present, and a comparable wealth of artistic styles.

As far as the record shows, few cultures of the past have shown any very lively appreciation of, or even mild interest in, the art of foreign peoples. The Portuguese, in the early years of contact with the Africans around their trading posts on Sherbro Island and in Nigeria, commissioned ivory objects from them—spoons, forks, hunting horns, and those astonishing lidded and footed containers that may be saltcellars. The Europeans did not attempt to trade for the cast-brass sculptures they saw in the palace of the Obas, the rulers of Benin; they appreciated the African's craftsmanship but not his art. The ivories show Portuguese grandees, horsemen, caravels, and coats of arms but only an occasional African face, serpent, or crocodile. Nor do foreigners figure largely in the African arts of the time. When they do, it is in the context of their equipment and its uses, a point made all the more explicit because of the strictly representational mode of Benin art. The interest of the Bini was in the arquebus and the mercenary, both useful additions to their technology, and went no further.

The Spanish adventures in the New World, although short-lived and violent, were a revelation. When Cortez and his entourage marched into Tenochtitlán, they were fascinated by the markets, the architecture, and the costumes of the Aztecs—and they were dazzled by the gold. When Pizarro's men, in the Inca capital at Cuzco, stood before the field of gold and silver maize with the life-size golden llamas and herdsmen in the Temple of the Sun, they thought only of their own opulent futures. Nothing in the conquistadors' training or backgrounds had prepared them for appreciation of Aztec and Inca art. In Mexico, Cortez and his men saw the great stone gods in the temples only as images of horror, reeking with blood from human sacrifices.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the Spanish dream of empire was over. Spain sent expeditions into the Pacific in search of rich new lands, but these travels came to nothing. It was not until a century and a half later, when Captain James Cook made his three great voyages, between 1768 and 1779, that European presence in the Pacific became a reality. Knowledge, rather than a quest for wealth, was Cook's ostensible goal. It is true that his secret orders from the British Admiralty enjoined on him the duty of raising the British flag wherever it seemed feasible, but the chief aim of the voyage was scientific.

The members of the Cook expeditions collected artifacts in the islands of the South Pacific, storing them in every cranny of their small ships, and the draftsmen drew the peoples they encountered as often as they sketched landscapes or kangaroos. Cook as commander kept voluminous diaries, and others on board recorded their experiences. In these documents we find, for the first time in the annals of European explorers, detailed comments on native carving and craftsmanship. On the whole, the art of the Maori aroused the greatest interest. Cook writes of the canoes that they were "adorned in as good a taste as any." But it was Joseph Banks, a young naturalist and the leading scientific light of the first voyage, who was the most perceptive and enthusiastic. Banks was impressed by the "beauty of [the canoes'] carving in general," and, remarkably, distinguished two styles that the Maori habitually used. Unlike Cook and the others, he thought the execution of the canoe carvings "rough," so that "the beauty of all their carvings depended entirely on the design."

The word in these statements that must engage our attention, even more than "beauty," is "taste," for it indicates that these men, some of them highly educated and among the best intellects of their time, were applying in the remoteness of Polynesia pretty much the same standards they would have back home in London. This lies beyond Cook's ceaseless wonder that so much fine craftsmanship could be accomplished with meager Neolithic tools. Here was a genuine appreciation of aesthetic qualities, and it was something new. In fact, it was before its time and was to have little effect in conserving the objects of its admiration.

The reports of the explorers were grist for the mills of eighteenth-century free thought. The "Indians" of the South Seas became the rage of London and Paris, the subjects for sentimental operettas. At the same time, they seemed to be the embodiments of the "natural man" proposed by Rousseau, and thus springboards for the liberal fantasies of Diderot—as well as for the nightmare sexuality of de Sade. This surge of interest was part of the rebellion against authority culminating in the French Revolution of 1789.

Another manifestation of that rebellion was the rise of fundamentalist Christian movements with their powerful drive toward missionary work. Their energy took them to the South Seas, and they found there not the bright world described by the aristocratic intellectual explorers but a dark morass of the most hopeless paganism. Their duty, as they saw it, was to enlighten pagan cultures, not understand them. The pagan gods, and the arts that served them, were to disappear. Wherever they could, the missionaries had the islanders' sculptured idols publicly burned.

The lure of wealth and the need to control its sources with increasing efficiency led to the establishment of colonial power. In Mexico and Peru, the Spanish incursion destroyed the ruling hierarchies with catastrophic abruptness, but in Africa and Oceania, the earliest European expeditions were restricted to coastal areas for centuries. In Africa, the Portuguese, Dutch, and British remained quietly in their forts and let trade flow to them from the interior for nearly three centuries. Ironically, it was an attempt by the British to suppress slave trading that, beginning in 1807, led to the establishment of secure and permanent settlements on the West Coast. Exploration of the interior had taken place before then but had been unofficial, sporadic, and hazardous. As it increased, the wealth of raw materials that fed the rapidly accelerating industrial revolution caused a scramble for African colonial possessions. This was finally regulated to some extent by the Conference of Berlin in 1884–85, during which the major part of the continent was carved up among the European powers.

Competition for colonies was not as fierce in the Pacific. The Polynesian islands adapted quickly to European influences. Hawaii, Fiji, and Tonga submitted voluntarily to the missions and to German, British, and American governors. In Melanesia, the history of West Africa repeated itself when the government of Queensland claimed Papua as part of an effort in 1883 to control "blackbirding," the violent trade in indentured slave labor. The great trading companies such as Godeffroy of Hamburg and Burns, Philp of Sydney had been active in the Western Pacific much longer, almost as colonial forces in their own right.

From the beginning of colonial expansion, Europeans collected native artwork. In the sixteenth century, objects that had been presented to the conquistadors by the Aztec and Inca rulers were sent to Europe and found their way into the curiosity cabinets of the nobles of the Holy Roman Empire. Albrecht Dürer, in 1520, wrote in his diary of these "wondrous artful things." However, no effort was made to accumulate more of them. After Captain Cook's voyages, quantities of South Seas objects were acquired privately; in London, Sir Ashton Lever devoted an ultimately disastrous amount of his fortune—he ended bankrupt—to the creation of a museum that was open from 1774 to 1786. Much of the collection eventually was acquired for Berlin's Königlich Preussiche Kunstkammer—a descendant of the sixteenth-century curiosity cabinets—which later became the Museum für Völkerkunde. Other objects from the collection found homes in the museums of Vienna and Dresden.

Concurrent with the rise of colonialism was the growth of the ethnographic museum, especially in Germany. The years from 1850 to 1875 saw the foundation of the great museums of Hamburg, Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden. Systematic collecting became the occupation, even the duty, of government officials and scientists. The great Berlin Expedition of 1912–13, for instance, not only collected and mapped in what is now the Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, but also included in its reports an assessment of the area's economic potential.

The thoroughness of the German museums was a cause of envy to others. The British government showed a singular indifference to the well-being and progress of the British Museum's Ethnographic Department and even to British anthropology. Sir Charles Hercules Read, in his presidential addresses to the Royal Anthropological Society, pointed out on more than one occasion that anthropology had much to offer the government and the commercial world, which would share in the rewards. At the very least, the insights of anthropology and its allied studies would be of greatest help in reconciling natives in the colonies to British law. This argument seems to have gone unheeded, but Sir Charles's pleas reflected a common attitude of the time: that colonial domination would last forever, while native cultures would inevitably die out.

Nonetheless, the very existence of ethnographic museums had, everywhere, a profound effect—not perhaps on the general public, but on the scientists who found confronting them a mass of raw data that posed innumerable problems. Few scientists had the least desire to encounter in real life the makers of all these foreign objects. Typical was the response of Sir James Frazer, the author of *The Golden Bough,* upon being asked if he would like to meet a "savage": "But God forbid!" The treasures arranged in glass cases were another matter. The questions they posed about history, psychology, and religion were inseparable. Did primitive man represent the childhood of the human race? Were the roots of religious belief to be traced somewhere among these extraordinary images? These and other questions were endlessly debated.

The study of primitive art began in the mid-nineteenth century, with the work of Gottfried Semper. At that time, the theories of Semper, as well as those of the British art historian Owen Jones, were very much influenced by the then contemporary attitude that the true aim of the visual arts is literal representation. For the next fifty years, art historians and archaeologists debated the origins of primitive art, going little further than proposing that one kind of design preceded another. It seemed that as far as they were concerned, art meant little more than pattern making, applied decoration. But for the great American ethnologist and teacher Franz Boas (1858–1942), art was produced by the living, by the Eskimos and the tribesmen on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia and Alaska, whose lives he himself had shared, and whose cultures were still largely viable—neither in decline, like many in Africa and the Pacific, nor totally dead, like those the archaeologists had studied. Boas tried to look behind the surface of a culture to the thought that animated it, and he discovered in Northwest Coast art a complex system of symbolism.

Symbolism as Boas described it is a practice of explaining a stylized design or pattern in terms of the naturalistic meaning applied to it by native artists, often—but not by any means always—with some ref-

erence to a myth or legend. He stopped there, without asking about the significance of the myth itself, but he did maintain that the assembly of these designs was a highly conscious and artful process. It is striking that Boas said little about Northwest Coast three-dimensional sculpture; when he did, it was mainly in terms of the two-dimensional design applied to it. Even so, there is no doubt that he made a vital contribution to anthropology and art history: he established once and for all that there is nothing simple about the works he discussed. His understanding of symbolism's role was limited, but he initiated a more profound comprehension of the significance of primitive art. Finally, he evoked the word "beauty," so rarely used before in this context, and insisted on its existence among all peoples:

> We have seen that the desire for artistic expression is universal. We may even say that the mass of the population in primitive society feels the need of beautifying their lives more keenly than civilized man. . . . Do they then possess the same keenness of aesthetic appreciation that is found at least in part in our population? I believe that in the narrow field of art that is characteristic of each people the enjoyment of beauty is quite the same as among ourselves. . . . It is the quality of their experience, not a difference in mental make-up, that determines the difference between modern and primitive art production and art appreciation.

Boas broadened this declaration in expressing his fundamental view of humanity: "Some theorists assume a mental equipment of primitive man distinct from that of civilized man. I have never seen a person in primitive life to whom this theory would apply." This statement is perhaps a greater contribution to the understanding of primitive art than any of his detailed analyses of Northwest Coast two-dimensional designs or Eskimo needlecases, for after Boas it was impossible to view the artists of primitive cultures as anything but conscious, functioning persons in complex and rich societies.

While archaeologists and anthropologists debated their problems, artists were looking at primitive art with fascination. The lonely figure of Gauguin may be taken as a starting point. Contemptuous of the classical canons of art as exemplified by Greek sculpture, he approved of the art of "the Persians, the Cambodians, and a little of the Egyptian," as he told a correspondent in 1897—choices as radical as could be made by anyone who had frequented the Louvre during that period. He had also been impressed by Aztec sculpture at the Paris Exposition of 1889, and he admired Japanese art, as did many of his fellow artists. When he reached the South Seas, Gauguin recognized the merits of Marquesan design; he wrote enthusiastically of its "unparalleled sense of decoration" and copied some of its details directly into his own paintings, sculptures, and woodcuts.

Outside the ethnographic museums, primitive art was to be found in the few shops and dealers' establishments that specialized in curiosities, weapons, and coins. It could also be found in unexpected places, such as the bar in Paris that the Fauvist painter Vlaminck entered one day in 1903 or 1904. There, among the bottles, stood a couple of African figures, which Vlaminck acquired for the price of drinks all around. He seems to have liked them for their "humanity" and perhaps what he saw as their quaintness. His friend Derain must also have seen them, and indeed in 1905 bought a now well-known Fang mask that Vlaminck owned. The two painters thus became the first private collectors of primitive art in modern times—or such is the story. Other young artists followed their lead—among them Matisse and Picasso, who, beginning in 1906, formed significant collections.

Picasso was profoundly influenced by the sculpture of the Ivory Coast and Gabon. In 1907 he embarked upon the extraordinary paintings that include almost direct renderings of African sculptures. The faces on the right side of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* can only be Picasso's own disturbing vision of Senufo or Bakota figures. By 1908, as he moved toward Cubism, Picasso left behind the grotesque and exotic qualities he saw in African sculpture and developed a purer sense of its powerful volumes.

African sculpture had, naturally enough, a strong effect on modern Western sculpture. If this influence is not to be found in Brancusi's works—though *The Kiss* would suggest most explicitly that it is—the art of his follower Modigliani shows it clearly. The stone heads that Modigliani carved after 1909—when Picasso had already changed his style—have as their forebears the masks of the Guro and Baule tribes of the Ivory Coast. Jacques Lipchitz, at about the same time, was collecting primitive art and antiquities; critics discerned in his sculpture an African influence that he himself only grudgingly acknowledged. The American sculptor Jacob Epstein, living in England, began early to accumulate primitive art and eventually owned one of the great private collections. Some of Epstein's highly stylized carvings, especially those of about 1912, are startlingly direct renderings of African sculpture.

In Germany, the artists of the Expressionist groups the Blaue Reiter and the Brücke discovered primitive art in circumstances different from those in France. When Ernst Ludwig Kirchner first saw African and Oceanic art, it was in the ethnographic museum in Dresden. Oceanic art, richly represented in German museums, had perhaps an even stronger impact there than African. The painters Emil Nolde and Max Pechstein actually

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The incised and painted design on the upper third of these large Peruvian storage jars, dating from between 300 and 100 B.C., is principally one of fantastic demons with attached trophy heads. The design is typical of the late Paracas style. Open-winged falcons, the raised heads of which form nubbins, appear also; the falcon heads face in a different direction on each jar.

journeyed to New Guinea and Micronesia, whereas no Frenchman had dreamed of traveling to the Ivory Coast. Their works, accordingly, include not only renderings of masks and other carvings, but also genre studies of native and colonial life in the islands.

At about the same time, American interest in the primitive arts was stirring. The painter Marsden Hartley wrote from Europe to Alfred Stieglitz in 1912 about the interest of German artists in the art of primitives, and in 1914 Stieglitz mounted the first American exhibition of African sculpture at his New York gallery, "291." The works were drawn largely from the tribes of the French colonies, as were others he showed in company with works by Picasso and Braque in 1915. A year later, Marius de Zayas, who had assisted Stieglitz with the 1914 show, published his study *African Negro Art: Its Influence on Modern Art*; in 1918 he wrote an introduction for an album of magnificent photographs of African sculpture by Charles Sheeler.

By 1917 the younger generation of poets and artists in Europe was alive to the primitive arts. The Dadaists, rebelling against Braque, Picasso, and Matisse, whom they considered already old masters, looked at primitive art in a different light. They found a reflection of their aims not in its formal qualities, but in what they thought of as its spontaneity. The Surrealists, a few years later, shifted their interest decisively from the art of Africa to that of Oceania, particularly Melanesia, which they saw, quite wrongly, as the unhindered reflections of the subconscious mind they themselves sought in their work. The accumulative techniques of primitive artists had already been noted by the poet Apollinaire, himself a collector of African sculptures, who wrote of its "charms, great plumes, pellets of resin, collars, pendants, iron tinklers, lianas, shells. . . . " These conjunctions appealed to some Surrealists as much as did the merging and crowded figures on New Ireland funerary carvings and Northwest Coast totem poles.

Pre-Columbian American sculpture was less felt as an influence on artists. Its impact is seen most notably in the work of the young Henry Moore, who almost directly copied the reclining figures of Mayan gods.

The interest among artists in the primitive arts engendered a general appreciation of these works, at first through the critics. By 1920, Roger Fry was able to write of African art: "I have to admit that some of these things are great sculpture—greater, I think, than anything we produced in the middle ages. Certainly they have the special qualities of sculpture in a higher degree. . . . These African artists really conceive form in three dimensions." He could hardly have said more, but had his eye not been trained by Cézanne, Braque, and Picasso, would he not have said much less? Indeed, by the time of his death in 1939, he had found little to interest him in Oceanic or Pre-Columbian Art.

By such means the public, almost without being aware of the process, began to be acclimatized to the primitive arts: the admiration that Picasso and Modigliani aroused in their viewers unversed in primitive art was often transferred to primitive art itself. To this day, many of us have in fact come to it by this route.

The work of anthropologists, the establishment of museums, and the enthusiasm of modern artists have all contributed to the assimilation of primitive art by a public far wider than could have been envisaged a mere half-century ago. A series of illuminating exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in the thirties, forties, and fifties was significant for exposing the public eye to primitive art. The Museum of Primitive Art, founded in 1957, was unique in its commitment to integrating primitive arts into those of the great civilizations, and its influence on the ethnographic and art museums of the United States was salutary. Before long museums were instituting separate departments of primitive art or displaying it in a more prominent or privileged position.

The sporadic fads of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the exotic—the passion for Chinoiserie and Pompeian decoration—have been superseded, then, by something more sophisticated and apparently much more stable. Today, attention is paid to the work of art from another tradition for its own sake, its own identity, even when it comes from so remote a source as one of the world's primitive cultures. Early art is becoming familiar to the public directly, rather than filtered through Western artists, and has taken an equal footing in the major museums with other great art.

At The Metropolitan Museum of Art, a promising beginning was made during the last decade of the nineteenth century by the acquisition of Pre-Columbian works. This course was not pursued, and indeed much of the collection was exiled to sister institutions in New York, although occasionally a significant object was purchased or given to the Museum. In 1969, however, Nelson A. Rockefeller offered the Metropolitan the renowned collection he formed for his Museum of Primitive Art—an enormous gift composed of several thousand works of superb quality. The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, built to house and display it, is now complete. With the opening of these galleries, the equal of many independent museums, the art of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas takes its place among the other great traditions of the world so richly represented in the Museum's collections.

It is likely that this bronze figure, shown with the accouterments and costume seen on figures of warriors in Benin art, was made at a provincial center under the influence of Benin, perhaps at the court of Owo or of Ida. Dated within the early and middle periods of Benin art (1455–1640), it has a spontaneous, somewhat rustic quality and a vigor that distinguish it from the objects produced then for the court of Benin. The warrior carries a shield and a sword (with blade missing). The necklace of leopard's teeth and glass beads was traditionally filled with protective medicines and worn into battle. The welts on the forehead represent traditional ornamental scars.

FACES

Even more than the human body, the face has been the great subject for the artist. It is, significantly, the site not only of the conjunction of the organs by which we sense the external world, but also of the small variations in form that distinguish and identify each of us. In a way the face is reassuring, no matter what its expression—the idea of a faceless man is a source of nightmares—but it is also awe-inspiring. Artists, particularly those of primitive cultures, have always seen it through a lens of feeling, which distorts it in myriad ways.

On the whole, the rulers of this world have looked with favor upon representations of themselves that were more naturalistic rather than less. Rulers have always held the insignia that are emblems of power, but they have rarely wished that power to be represented merely by outward signs. They saw themselves as embodiments of strength and authority in their own physical forms, and they wished to be portrayed accordingly: the ruler might be a god (there are innumerable cases of rulers claiming divinity), but he was a god in human shape. The heads of the Obas of Benin (p. 18), some of the most naturalistic sculptures from the African continent, are rarely direct portraits but always clearly representations of men who rule.

In the artistic realm of the supernatural, as well, the primitive artist felt the need to follow the contours of the human face, though he usually threw something off-balance. The distortion of a single feature can do this very effectively, and the one most commonly used in this way is the eye, proverbially the most expressive of all the features. The mouth is capable of impressive grimaces, of humor or terror, and can appear as an entryway to unknown and dreadful regions—caves, the underworld, the grave. The protruding tongue in Mexico or New Zealand suggests aggression. The nose can be elongated into a powerful weaponlike extension. But the eyes are almost infinite in the messages, sometimes ambiguous, they convey. The lowered lids of a Tlingit mask (p. 14) suggest tranquillity or rest, certainly, but also a brooding, leashed energy. It is the full glare of the eye in, for instance, carvings on Sepik River shields that leaves no doubt of a determination to intimidate the viewer. Almost more alarming are the circular apertures of some Dan masks—especially since the real human eyes could once be seen, mobile and incongruous, lurking behind them.

The depiction of the face can be entirely metamorphosed into a new image by various forms of distortion used as powerful tools by the primitive artists: stylization into geometric forms in which only the faintest traces of the original features can still be discerned, through a veil of pattern (p. 25) or even blank space; the use of materials foreign to the human body, such as turtle shell (pp. 12 and 17), bark cloth, or fiber; and the use of brilliant color overlaying the features (pp. 14–15). It is a testimony to the strength of the human face that despite such distortions, it remains recognizable and awesome.

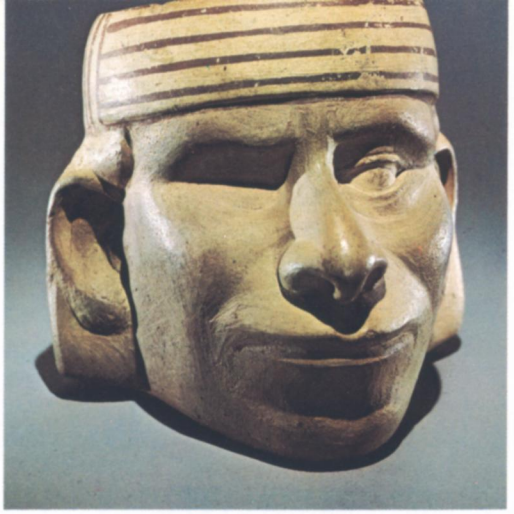
In the Torres Strait Islands off southern Papua New Guinea, a unique material was used for masks: thin plates of turtle shell, pierced and tied together. This one, representing a human head on which a frigate bird perches, is from Mabuiag. Although a few other such masks exist, their use and intention are unknown.

The highly naturalistic mask on the left was used by a shaman of the Tlingit tribe of Alaska. It is said to have been found in his grave. The carving from the Yau (or Warsei) people of Papua New Guinea, right, is used in ceremonies for the harvesting of yams. It embodies spirits of the original ancestors who rose out of an underground world.

The famous mid-sixteenth-century ivory mask from the Bini of Nigeria was worn on the belt of a ruler as part of his regalia. The iron inlays on the forehead represent tribal scarifications, and around the hair is a frieze of stylized heads of Portuguese mercenaries.

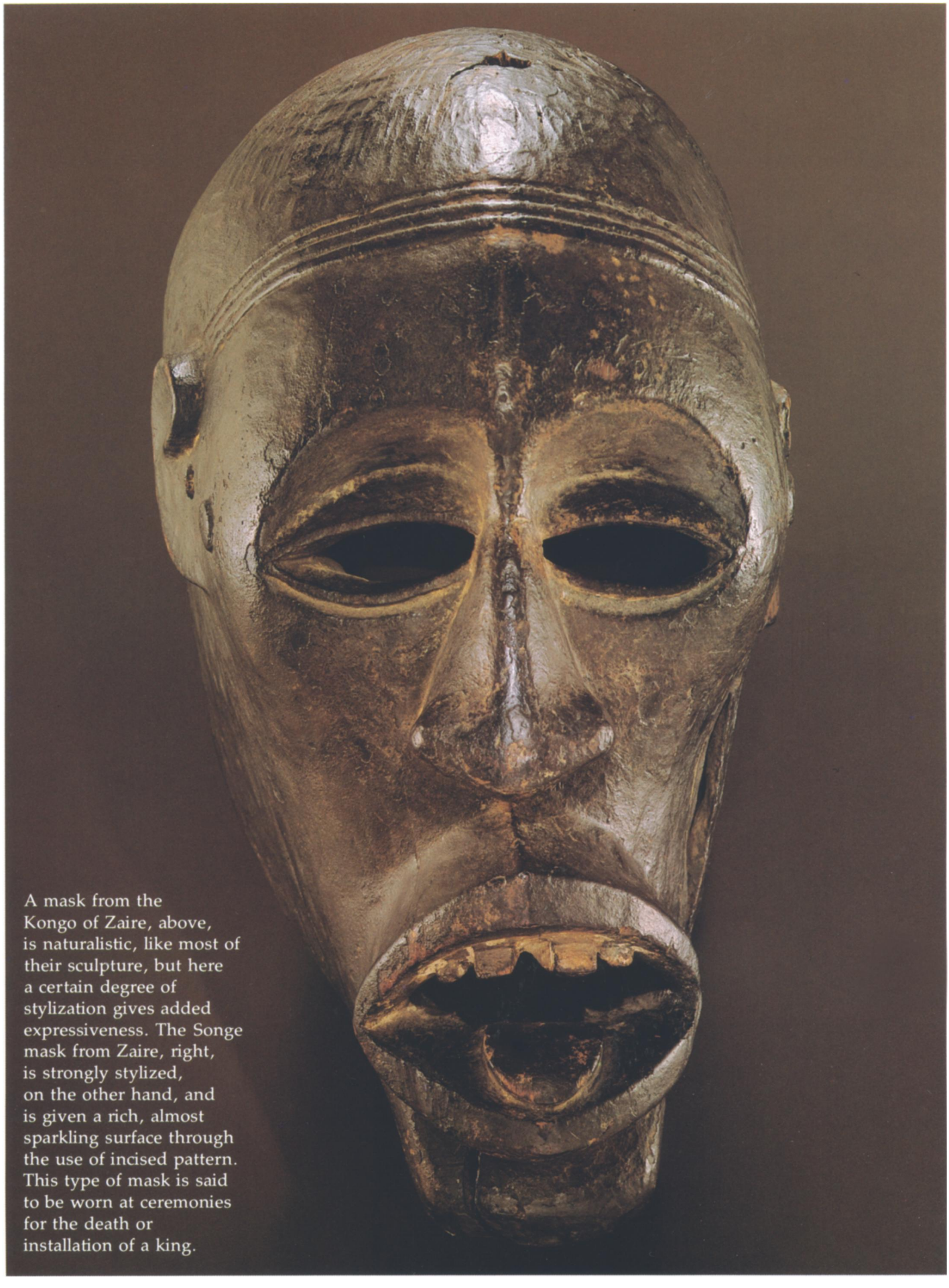
No specific use is known for naturalistic masks like this one from Erub Island in the Torres Strait south of Papua New Guinea; on other islands they were worn at funerary ceremonies by men who mimed the course of the sun as a symbol of the passage of human life.

Heads in dark brass (usually called bronze) were kept on the royal altars of Benin City in Nigeria as memorials to ancestors: in the one below, dating from the mid-sixteenth century, the subject is shown wearing regalia—cap and choker—of coral beads, as the king does to this day. The jar in the form of a one-eyed man's head, upper right, is typical of the naturalistic ceramics of the Mochica of Peru (A.D. 500–700). A mask in the Mixteca style (A.D. 1250–1500) of Mexico shows the rain god Tlaloc.

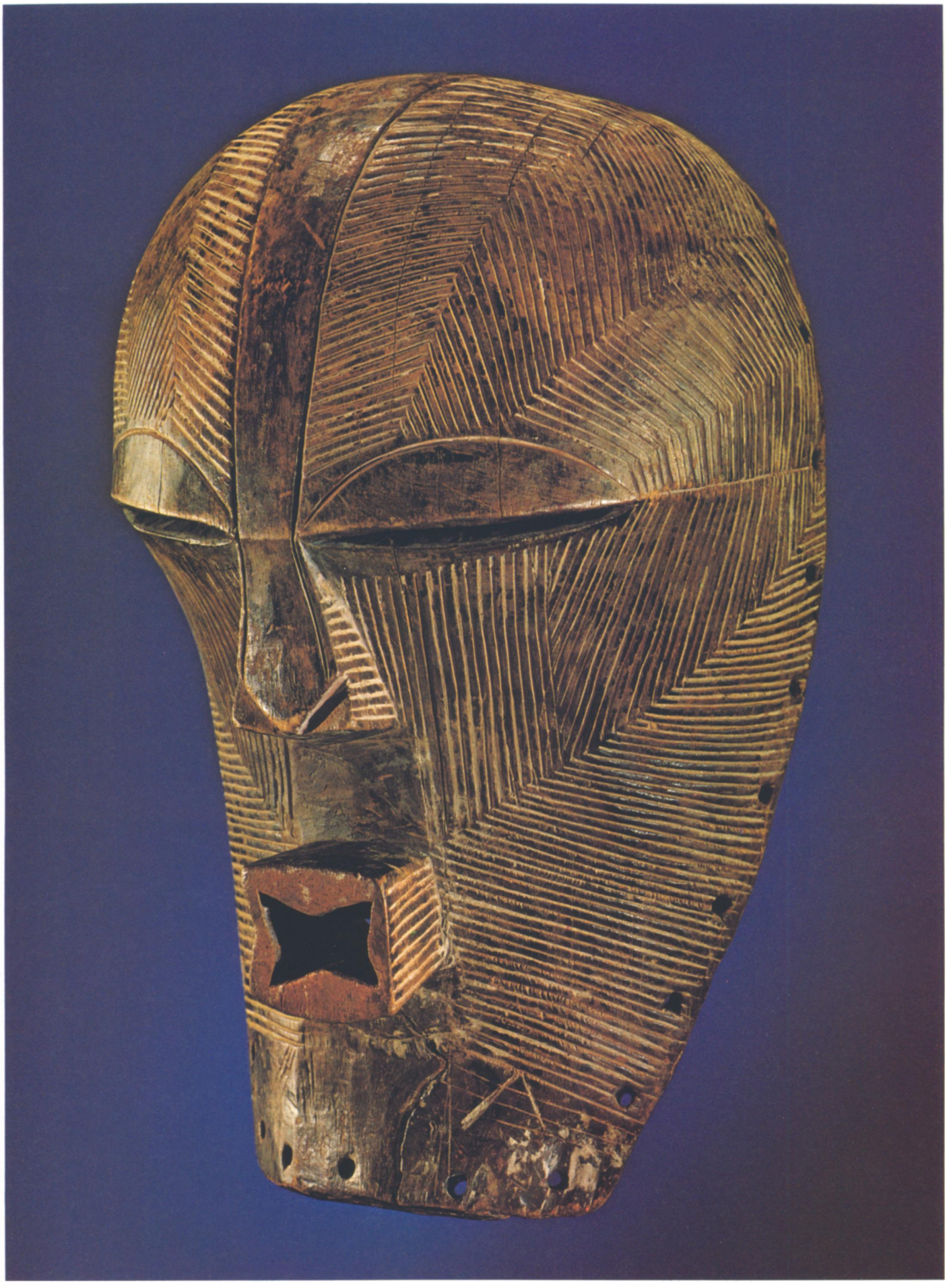


This Nigerian headdress is an unusually sophisticated Yoruba sculpture built from geometric shapes. Two disc-shaped faces carved of one piece of wood stand on a neck attached to a wooden cap. Overlying each is the long-nosed visage of a horned animal, which reuses elements of the larger face. This headdress was apparently worn by a dancer whose body was concealed by a costume attached over the wooden cap, but its use remains obscure. The Ekoi headpiece from Nigeria (right) is characteristically naturalistic. The two faces are male and female.

Funerary masks like this Peruvian Chimu example (1200–1400) were elaborately painted and ornamented. Almost the entire golden surface would be hidden, with perhaps only the nose and the outline of the eyes remaining uncovered. A measure of the awe the Europeans experienced before the golden and "barbaric" treasures of ancient America can be understood by looking at this mask.



A mask from the Kongo of Zaire, above, is naturalistic, like most of their sculpture, but here a certain degree of stylization gives added expressiveness. The Songe mask from Zaire, right, is strongly stylized, on the other hand, and is given a rich, almost sparkling surface through the use of incised pattern. This type of mask is said to be worn at ceremonies for the death or installation of a king.



FIGURES

In primitive art, the human figure almost invariably represents an ideal of some kind—usually spiritual, and only rarely physical. Secular genre scenes are almost nonexistent; groups of figures, which are certainly common enough in the Pre-Columbian art of Mexico or Peru, are cult or ritual scenes. The dualism of the beings of the spiritual world, conceived as fraternal or sexual partners, is a theme that occurs frequently in primitive art. It expresses not only the oppositions and conjunctions of the actual world but also the conflicts and joinings of the remote ancestors that made this world possible. The multiplicity of spiritual attributes, which is a feature of African religious thought, can also be expressed in literal and visible form.

In many mythologies the first beast and the first man are only aspects of a single being who takes on the form of either, at will. Hence some images show an animal or bird that is apparently clutching a human figure but is really meant to be melded into it.

Some works, though they are relatively few, depict the triumph of man over the animal world, such as the mounted horseman (p. 33). These are statements of the triumphs of domestication. The animal's power is still important, but now only inasmuch as its subordination demonstrates the mastery assumed by the human being.

It is in the monuments of kingdoms, however, that we find secular groupings expressive of power and control that call to mind the great bas-relief scenes of conquering Egyptian pharaohs or the baroque frescos that glorify European monarchs. The same impulse lies behind the reliefs of Benin kings and attendants (p. 33) or representations of Maya rulers receiving homage.

In spite of these marvelous exceptions, the single figure—an expression of the concentrated power of the individual—is the general rule in primitive art. It stands to reason that to undertake the difficult task of carving in wood or stone, or molding in ceramic, the artist needed a worthy subject; and it follows that the worthiest that took human shape were the ancestors and the gods. Without the creative powers of the gods there could be no ancestors; and without the ancestors there would be no present day. The present was best shown, if at all, in figures that embodied states of well-being, such as the dancing king (p. 29) from Cameroon.

There is a whole language of gesture in these human figures, and it is often ambiguous, or at least equivocal. Many figures kneel, but this is not always a gesture of submission. The ecstatic Maya priest certainly has lowered himself to the ground to adore his god (p. 36). On the other hand, contact with the ground is sometimes made by a seated god himself. To be raised above the ground on a stool is usually a mark of authority (p. 39), and the stool itself is revered, as in parts of New Guinea and Africa.

The standing figure is perhaps the simplest manifestation of being. Of itself it makes no claims in its evident immobility and near-passivity; the viewer must read into it what he sees and knows. When the hands begin to rise, he knows he may be in the presence of supplication or threat, both modes of averting evil. When the hands reach upward with full strength, he knows with certainty that man is striving for completion, the junction of earth and heaven.

The Aztecs were among the most gifted sculptors ever to work in ancient America. An aggressive, warrior people, they dominated much of Mexico in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Among Aztec works in stone are figures known as standard-bearers, so named as they presumably held banners or standards in their hands. This standard-bearer was made in Veracruz in the next-to-last decade of the fifteenth century.

Spoons, unlike knives and forks, are universal tools for eating and serving food. The gestures of taking up and pouring out that can be made with them are expressions of abundance and generosity: the large ceremonial spoon, at the right, of the Dan tribe of Liberia is carried in danced expressions of pride by wives of important men and used to distribute rice at feasts. The Bangwa of Cameroon were one of the few African peoples to attack the problem of movement in sculpture. Their pieces included paired figures of kings and queens performing dance steps. Shown singing and executing a rhythmical turning-and-crouching movement, the king figure at the far right carries his pipe in the left hand and his drinking gourd in the right.

The ceramic vessel, left, made by the Huastec people of northern Veracruz about A.D. 1400–1500, is an oddly infantile, obese form that, like the fat babyish figures of the Olmec people, suggests a strange divinity. The figure is ornamented with beads between the brows and on the lower lip and covered with body-painting designs. Figure sculptures are rare in Micronesia. The one below from the Palau Islands, originally set in the gable of a men's gathering house, represents a woman named Dilukai who was strapped into this position, according to legend, as punishment for spreading disease.

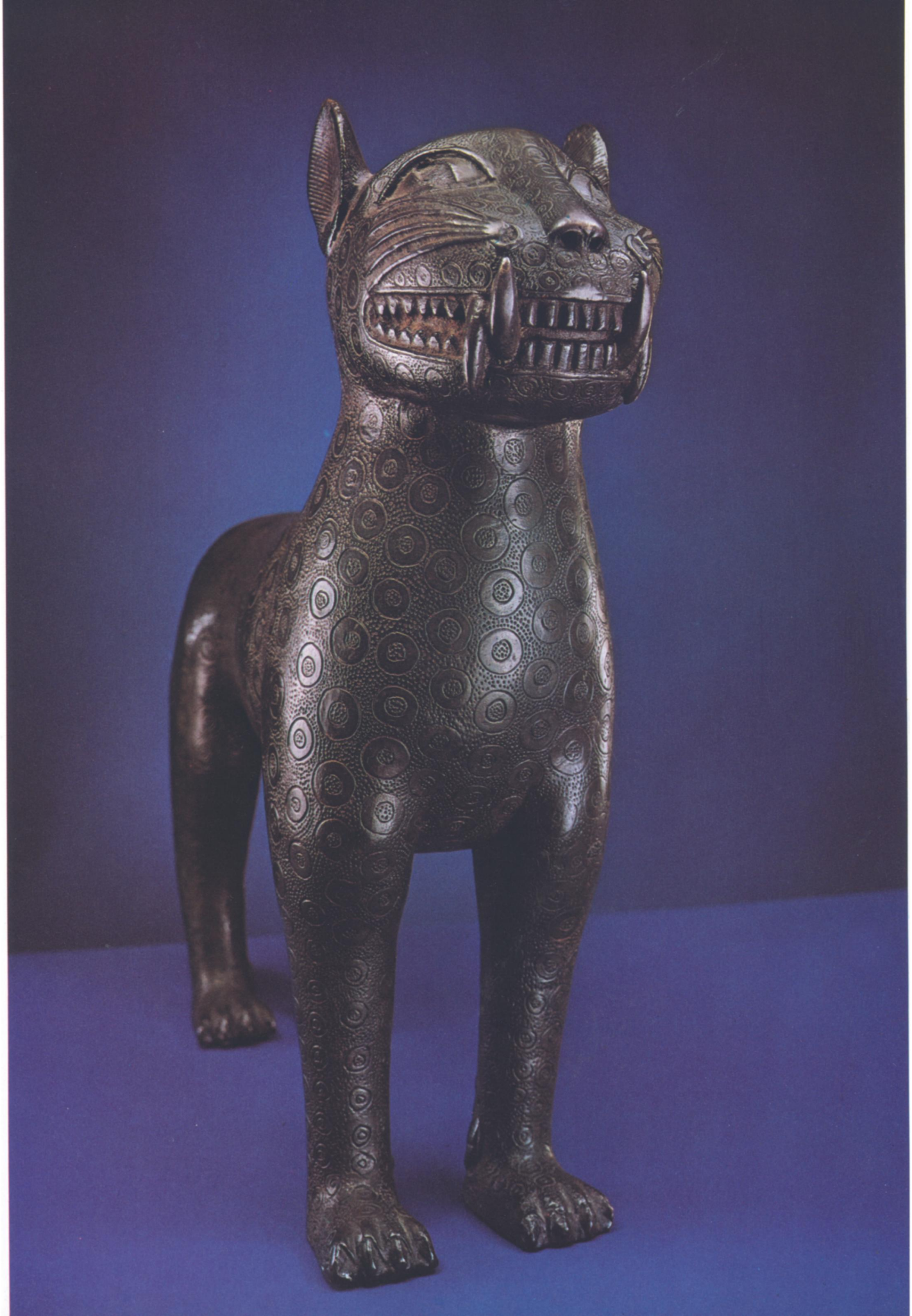
A man or spirit riding a dog is the subject of the Kongo fetish from Zaire on the left. The mirror set in the figure's belly seals in magic substances and deflects malign influences. The upraised hand probably held a weapon to fight enemies. The brass (or bronze) plaque from Benin City at right adorned a pillar of the palace in the sixteenth to seventeenth century. The ruler rides side-saddle, supported by the hands of two retainers while being protected from the sun's glare by the shields of two others.

This massive Benin bronze staff (left) was made for an eighteenth-century oba (king) after a period when the king's authority was challenged. Probably held on state occasions as an emblem of the oba's legitimate power, the staff has a hollow chamber with a clapper in it. The oba is shown standing on an elephant, a clear statement about who is literally and figuratively on top.

Such ornaments as the Mochica ear spools (A.D. 200–500) are great treasures of ancient Peruvian art. Bird-headed messengers dash across the face of these, clutching bags in outstretched hands.

The Early Classic Maya figure of a kneeling priest or dignitary at left (A.D. 400–500) holds his arms in an attitude of respect or adoration. A plaquelike object once fitted between the arms and thighs. The ceramic half-length figure from Veracruz (A.D. 300–900), right, represents Ehecatl, the god of wind.

The small, pugnacious figures that appear as pendants among the Tairona of Colombia (1200–1500) are most extraordinary when the figures wear enormous headdresses that intricately combine bird and animal heads and multiple spiral elements. This figure from the Sierra Nevada region is particularly elaborate. The staff at the right, of forged iron surmounted by a solid cast-bronze seated figure, is one of two similar staffs found in Mali. It is a far larger and more elaborate casting than other bronzes known from the Dogon-Bozo area and may be of an early date.



ANIMALS

It is not without significance that the Bible describes the genesis of the birds, sea creatures, and animals as taking place before the creation of mankind. The story can certainly be read as describing the preparation of the world for Adam, who then establishes his dominion by giving the other creatures names. To name something, or to be able to call it by a name, often represents a claim to power over it. In many cultures names have been powerful magic spells.

The animal kingdom is perhaps even more central to a conception of the world order that is older than that of the Bible. Before the time came when humans turned them into pets and beasts of burden or funneled them into controlled preserves and labeled them "endangered species," the animals were the true rulers of the world. When the puny population of the human race could have been trampled out of existence under the advance of a single great herd of bison or reindeer, it was clear indeed who were the masters. Mankind knew well enough that the animals were stronger, fiercer, cleverer, and certainly more beautiful than themselves. They would have understood by instinct, even by conviction, the poet Paul Eluard's phrase "the animals and their men."

It is with eyes attuned as much as possible to this view that we should look at the animals as they are shown by the artists of the primitive world. Many of them show the animals as ancestors of man. The species vary from one part of the world to another, but generally they are not the milder sort.

The jaguar, one of the great feline predators, prowls through all the ancient art of the Americas, a fanged and clawed image of terror. He occurs in a hundred guises, some of which he seems to share with the coyote, as a being of water and the sky. In Central America he merges with a water monster, the crocodile, a beast that makes many appearances in its own right. In many parts of Middle and South America the jaguar was seen as the begetter of mankind.

Indeed it is a measure of their power that animals have often been seen as man's true ancestors, our fathers and mothers of long ago. Consequently, hunting was often forbidden to the animals' putative descendants; in some cultures, men were obliged to ask the animal's permission for the hunt in advance and to apologize to it for its loss of life afterwards.

Masks in animal form often express this kinship; the man becomes his ancestral beast and reenacts its deeds. Sometimes he impersonates animals or animallike heroes who taught humanity essential skills. The famous antelope headdresses of the Bambara of Mali (p. 44) represent Tyi Wara, a being who taught mankind the secrets of agriculture. Very often in Africa the mask represents not so much the animal itself as qualities associated with it that are in turn associated with gods: the wildness of the gorilla, the power of the buffalo. Emblematic features are combined to represent the totality of a god's attributes. They also represent the human being's haunting discontent with his own powers, his longing to make them ever greater.

The eighteenth-century bronze leopard, left , from Benin City was a royal beast; kept in the palace as symbols of the ruler's power, leopards were led on leashes before him during processions. This sculpture was also used as a vessel for liquids and was filled through an opening in the top of the head.

This huge nose ornament—over seven inches wide—on a silver-sheet base is from Loma Negra, Peru (Mochica period, 200 B.C.–A.D. 500). Gold attachments, fastened by small flanges, depict a pair of crayfish.

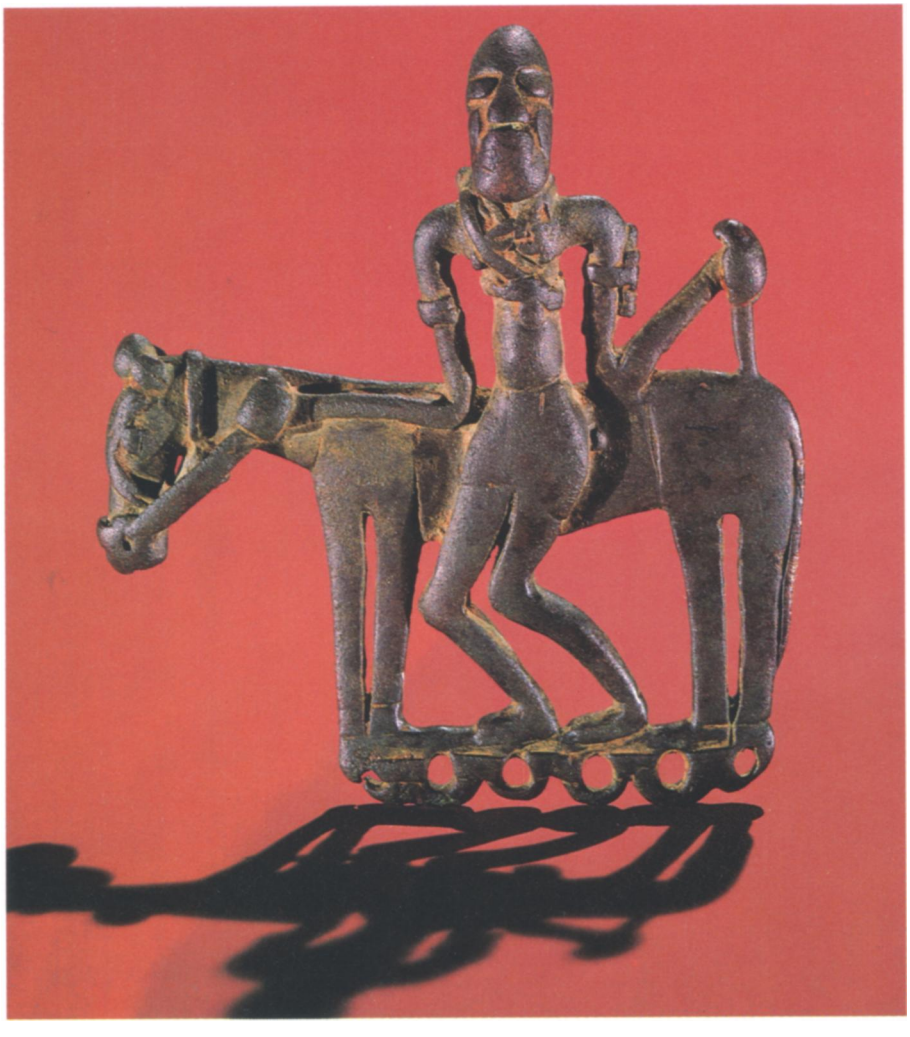
The *tyi wara* dance (named after the mythical being who taught mankind the secret of agriculture) of the Bamana (Bambara) of Mali is one of the best-known African ceremonials, largely because of the wooden antelopes attached to the performers' basketry caps. The one at left is from the eastern group of the tribe. At hoeing and groundclearing occasions, the most diligent male workers are chosen to leap and turn to the beating of drums in imitation of animals. A sheet-silver container in the form of a deer (right) was part of a tomb's rich furnishings. Dating from the Chimu empire (A.D. 1000–1450) of the north coast of Peru, it is said to have been discovered near Chan Chan, the Chimu capital city.

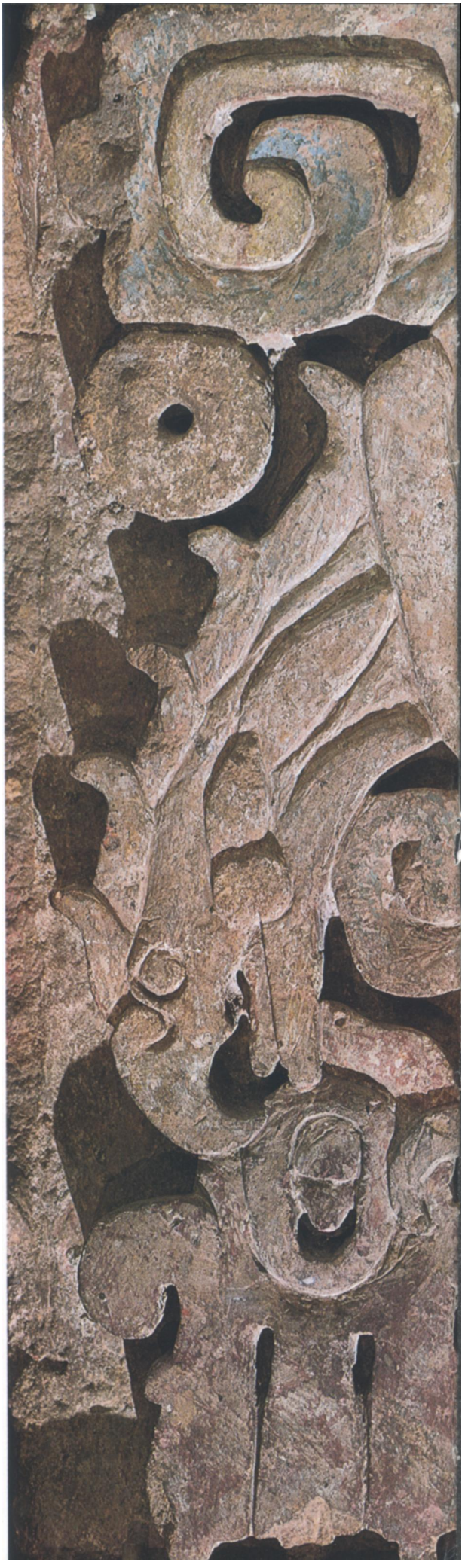
In the Ica poncho, above left, of South Coast Peru (A.D. 1000–1450), all is confusion. On the right are a rampant feline and perhaps another with human headdress. To the left, a feline appears to be strangling another crowned cat with its remarkably monkeylike tail. Gold bird pendants were common in

the ancient cultures of Central and South America, and the one at the right from Panama is in the Veraguas style (A.D. 800–1500); the earlike projections are stylized crocodile heads. From the mid-nineteenth century, great quantities of such objects were melted down by grave-hunters, but happily, many remain.

Two rampant felines confront each other in this sleeveless shirt from the Ica Valley of the south coast of Peru (Inca period, A.D. 1438–1532). The simplicity and vigor of color and design are typical of the region and the period. The nineteenth-century Haida mask of a sea bear, right, was beaten out of copper, a material rarely used in masks made by the Indians of the American Northwest Coast. It is trimmed with sea-otter fur, inlaid with plates of haliotis shell, and ornamented with tattooing patterns.

The date of this unique bronze African pendant is unknown, but it was probably worn on the chest of a chief or a man of rank. The six loops at the bottom presumably once supported small bells or simple pendants. Such a combination of profile and frontal views is rarely seen in African art. The subject of horse and rider may be a reference to the Dogon myth of the first blacksmith who carried the original human ancestors, animals, grains, and technological knowledge down to earth in an ark. The horse was the first animal out of the ark. In the blacksmith's fall to earth, he broke his legs, until then unarticulated and flexible: thenceforth, humans had knees and elbows, enabling them to work and dance. Ancient Mexican imagery is often compelling and, to the modern eye, a bit brutal in subject matter. In the relief at the right, which comes from Veracruz and dates to the eleventh or twelfth century, the wonderfully realized bird, carefully and ornamentally detailed, is an eagle devouring a human heart.





ABSTRACTIONS

Broadly speaking, the art of the primitive world is representational. The vision animating it may differ very greatly from that of art in the West, but at that, Western concepts of visual verisimilitude have themselves varied widely from period to period. Even more marked is the divergence of any representational work of art—whether in two or three dimensions—from the natural phenomenon it purports to portray. Each of us sees what our society and our time tell us that we see, and each artist portrays a personal version of what society tells him. The sixteenth-century bronze head of a Nigerian ruler is no less true to nature than a photographic portrait by Julia Margaret Cameron. Even in many of the distortions of primitive art, the artist has not invented or gone far beyond nature, but, rather, he has either relied upon it, or, as we have learned, he has faithfully recreated visions from his dreams.

Beyond representations of animals, men, and gods—often interchangeable as they are—there lies yet another realm, less immediately accessible in its meaning and less commonly encountered. It includes works of art in styles akin to those we call abstract.

The primitive artist moves from naturalism to abstraction without embarrassment, even in the same work. One of the most famous examples of this is to be found in the art of the Massim area of New Guinea, where there is an extraordinary range of gradations from one mode to the other based on a single theme, such as the head of a frigate bird. They span the possibilities between naturalism, on the one hand, and reduction of the form to a simple scroll, on the other. Some such works, like the geometric engravings made by some Australian aboriginal groups consisting of arrangements of concentric circles linked by straight lines, do indeed bear a strong resemblance to styles that have appeared only recently in the Western world. The Australian engravings, on slabs of stone or wood, are in fact emblematic illustrations of sacred myths. Again, the apparently totally abstract designs of New Ireland breast ornaments are superb examples of intricate pattern constructed from repetition of the simplest elements. These designs may be stylized human or bird figures.

There are instances, however, in which flat pattern can be abstract—at least as far as we know. Among them are those in which pattern seems to have been used for purely decorative purposes, including the brilliant feather-decked ponchos of the Inca aristocracy (p. 52). Even these, however, may have been keyed to the wearer's family or rank.

Command of three-dimensional form is especially clear when the images or forms are the least immediately recognizable. A Peruvian stirrup-spout pot of the Paracas Necropolis period, with its modeling in clay of a faceted shape, perhaps a fruit, can be compared with a great Mochica gold necklace with multiple, breastlike units, made several centuries later. Clay and gold may be at opposite ends of the scale in terms of value, but the same rigorous control of form and the same degree of sophistication are to be found in objects made of either material.

This miniature poncho from Peru was apparently made as an Inca funerary offering. The use of feathers from tropical birds found only far to the east is an indication of the huge area covered by Inca trading.

The pair of ear spools shown here was worn by some grandee of the Coastal Huari people living in the Nazca Valley of Peru about A.D. 600–1000. The support is of bone; the elaborate mosaic in shell and stones inlaid on the discs is at first glance abstract, yet it actually includes not only geometric elements but also the heads of felines.

CREDITS

Cover: Figure. Kongo, Zaire. 19th–20th century. Wood, cloth, beads, shells, horns. H. 23⅛ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.127
Inside front and back covers: Mantle. Coastal Huari (Tiahuanaco), Peru, Central Coast, area of Patvilica (?). A.D. 600–1000. Cotton, wool. 72 x 64 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Arthur M. Bullowa, 1973. 1978.412.257
Back cover: Shield. Ysabel, Solomon Islands. Basketry, clay, shell inlay. H. 33¼ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1972. 1978.412.730
4 Saltcellar. Bini-Portuguese. Early 16th century. Ivory. H. 7⅛ in. Louis V. Bell and Rogers Funds. 1972.63
8 Pair of Storage Jars. Late Paracas, Palpa Valley, Peru. 300–100 B.C. Grayware, postfired paint. H. 17¼, 17½ in. Gift of Nathan Cummings. 1974.123.1,2
11 Warrior. Yoruba, Nigeria. 1455–1640. Bronze. H. 12¾ in. Purchase, Edith Perry Chapman Fund, Rogers, Pfeiffer, Fletcher, and Dodge Funds, Mrs. Donald M. Oenslager Gift, in memory of her husband, Geert C. E. Prinz Gift, and Funds from Various Donors, 1977. 1977.173
12 Mask. Mabuiag Island, Torres Strait, Papua New Guinea. Turtle shell, other materials. W. 25 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1967. 1978.412.1510
14 Mask. Tlingit, Alaska. 19th–20th century. Wood, paint, hide, metal. H. 13⅝ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.440
15 Figure for Yam Cult. Yau, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea. Wood, paint. H. 48 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Mrs. Wallace K. Harrison Gift, 1974. 1978.412.1700
16 Belt Mask. Court of Benin, Nigeria. 16th century. Ivory. H. 9⅜ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972. 1978.412.323
17 Mask. Erub Island, Torres Strait, Papua New Guinea. Turtle shell, hair. H. 16⅛ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972. 1978.412.729
18 Head. Court of Benin, Nigeria. 16th century. Bronze. H. 9¼ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.86
19 Above: Effigy Jar. Mochica, Peru, North Coast. A.D. 500–700. Ceramic, slip. H. 4⅝ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1972. 1978.412.72
19 Below: Tlaloc Mask (God of Rain). Mixteca-Puebla, Mexico. A.D. 1250–1500. Stone. H. 5½ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.1062
20 Janus Headdress. Yoruba, Nigeria. 19th–20th century. Wood. H. 24 in. Fletcher and Rogers Funds. 1976.329
21 Janus-Faced Headdress. Ekoi (Ekparabrong clan), Cross River, Nigeria. Wood, skin, horns. H. 21 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.299
22–23 Funerary Mask. Chimu, Peru. A.D. 1200–1400. Gold, overlays, paint. H. 11½ in. Gift and Bequest of Alice K. Bache, 1974, 1977. 1974.271.35
24 Mask. Kongo, Zaire. 19th–20th century. Wood. H. 14⅝ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.27
25 Mask. Songe, Zaire. 19th–20th century. Wood, coloring. H. 17½ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.83
26 Seated Standard-Bearer. Aztec, Castillo de Teayo, Mexico. Late 15th century. Laminated sandstone. 31⅝ x 13⅜ in. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund. 62.47
28 Ceremonial Spoon. Dan, Liberia. 19th–20th century. Wood. L. 18¼ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.264
29 Standing Male Figure. Bangwa, Cameroon. 19th–20th century. Wood. H. 40¼ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller and Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1968. 1978.412.576
30 Vessel in Form of Seated Figure. Huastec, Northern Veracruz, Mexico. 15th century. Ceramic, paint. H. 13½ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1965. 1978.412.141
31 Female Figure from Ceremonial House Gable. Palau Island, Caroline Islands. Wood, pigment. H. 25⅔ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller and Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1970. 1978.412.1558 a-d
32 Figure Seated on a Dog. Kongo, Zaire. 19th–20th century. Wood, glass, pigment. H. 13 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1966. 1978.412.531
33 Plaque with Warrior. Court of Benin, Nigeria. 16th–17th century. Bronze. H. 19½ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.309
34 Rattle Staff (Uxure). Court of Benin, Nigeria. Mid-18th century. Bronze. H. 63½ in. Ann and George Blumenthal Fund. 1974.5
35 Pair of Ear Spools. Mochica, Peru. A.D. 200–500. Gold, stone, shell inlay. Diam. 3¾ in. Gift and Bequest of Alice K. Bache, 1966, 1977. 66.196.40 41
36 Kneeling Figure of Dignitary or Priest. Early Classic Maya, Mexico, said to have been found near Tabasco-Guatemala border. 6th–9th century. Wood. H. 14⅛ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.1063
37 Half-Figure of Ehecatl. Classic Veracruz (?), Mexico. 7th–9th century. A.D. Ceramic. H. 33¾ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1963. 1978.412.27
38 Pendant: Figure with Headdress. Tairona, Sierra Nevada area, Colombia. 14th–16th century. Gold. H. 5¼ in. Gift of H. L. Bache Foundation. 69.7.10
39 Staff with Seated Male Figure. Dogon or Bozo, Mali. Date unknown. Bronze, iron. H. 30 in. Edith Perry Chapman Fund. 1975.306
40 Leopard. Court of Benin, Nigeria. 17th–18th century. Bronze. H. 15½ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972. 1978.412.320
42–43 Nose Ornament. Mochica, Peru, Loma Negra area. 200 B.C.–A.D. 500. Silver-gilt copper, gold, stone inlays. W. 7⅜ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.1236
44 Antelope Headpiece. Bamana, Mali. Wood. H. 28 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1964. 1978.412.436
45 Effigy Vessel of Deer. Chimu, North Coast, area of Chan Chan, Peru. 14th–15th century A.D. Silver. H. 5 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1969. 1978.412.160
46 Shirt (detail). Ica, Peru, South Coast. 13th–15th century. Wool, cotton. 23½ x 30¼ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.588
47 Pendant, Eagle. Veraguas, Panama. 13th–14th century. Gold. H. 4½ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.735
48 Sleeveless Shirt. Coastal Inca, South Coast, Ica Valley, Peru. 15th–16th century A.D. Wool, cotton. 41½ x 31 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.1131
49 Sea-Bear Mask. Haida or Tlinget, British Columbia or Alaska. Late 19th century. Copper, fur, shell inlays. H. 12 in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.830
50 Pendant, Male Figure with a Horse. Dogon or Bozo, Mali. Date unknown. Bronze. H. 3¼ in. Edith Perry Chapman Fund. 1975.205
51 Relief Slab of Eagle Devouring Heart (detail). Early Postclassic, said to be from northern Veracruz, near Tampico, Mexico. A.D. 1000–1200. Limestone with traces of stucco and red-orange, dark red, ochre, white, blue-green, black, and light blue paint. H. 27½ in. Gift of Frederic E. Church. 93.27.1-2
52 Miniature Poncho. Coastal Inca, South Coast, Ullujaya, Ica Valley, Peru. 1470–1532. Feathers, cotton cloth, silver. 8¼ x 8¾ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979. 1979.206.627
54–55 Pair of Ear Spools. Coastal Huari (Tiahuanaco), South Coast, from Cahuachi, Nazca Valley, Peru. 6th–10th century A.D. Bone, shell, stone. H. 2⅜ in. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1968. 1978.412.215,216

Notes: p. **7** Banks Journal; p. **8** Frazer: Hayes, H.R. *From Ape to Angel* (New York: 1958), p. 121; p. **9** Boas, F. *Primitive Art* (Oslo: 1927), p. 356; p. **10** Fry, R. "Negro Sculpture," in *Vision and Design*, 7th ed. (London: 1957).

Back cover: Detail of a ceremonial shield from the Solomon Islands. The design is carried out in pieces of nautilus shell set in a resinous *paste spread over a wickerwork base.*