

MAY 1969



The Metropolitan Museum of Art BULLETIN



Art of Oceania, Africa, and the Americas

ROBERT GOLDWATER

*Chairman, Administrative Committee, The Museum of Primitive Art, and
Professor, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University*

A quick glance through the illustrations on the following pages will make one fact abundantly clear: as widely separated in purpose and appearance as they are in geography and time, these works are so various that there is no one standard, no one attitude, no one aesthetic by which they can be judged. Works of visual art are first of all – and also perhaps last of all – physical objects, and these surprising pieces differ so radically among themselves in materials, technique, aspect, and finish that each must be approached anew because each has its own particular “style.” What is more, as the captions describing the use and function of these objects reveal, their meanings are just as diverse. They played fundamentally different roles in societies that varied in size, in technical knowledge, in social structure, in religious belief, and in historical tradition. Thus, generalizations about the “form” or “content” of these arts are at best only minimally helpful and at worst misleading.

Anthropologists have been fond of emphasizing that the arts of the many cultures of Oceania, Africa, and the Americas are, in the main, functional. This is undoubtedly true. The figures, masks, pendants, houseposts, stools, ceramic bowls, and all the other “useful” objects have a definite role to play in civic ceremony or religious ritual, or they may be aids to magic or symbols of wealth and power. But how does this fact set *these* arts apart from others that we are more familiar with? The great preponderance of the world’s art down to (and perhaps even including our own time) has played just such roles and been created for similar specific “functional” purposes. Such uses prompt and influence creation, but they do not alone determine character and quality. The simple Christian function of a Romanesque Madonna is identical with that of a Renaissance Madonna, yet the two are profoundly different. In the same way two African sculptures, both ancestral figures, can be just as far apart in all their stylistic, iconographic, and social implications.

How, then, are we to approach these arts, which are unlike those of our more familiar Western tradition? First, by abandoning the term “primitive” by which they have generally been known. It does not describe the cultures from which the works come: though these cultures may have relatively simple technologies, they are socially complicated and psychologically sophisticated. Nor, quite evidently, does it describe the

Contents

Art of Oceania, Africa, and the Americas

ROBERT GOLDWATER 397

A Forgotten Record of Turkish Exotica

ALEXANDRINE
ST. CLAIR 411

Accessions from the Florance Waterbury Collection

FONG CHOW 424

*A special exhibition entitled
Art of Oceania, Africa, and the
Americas from The Museum of
Primitive Art, including more than
900 pieces, will be on view at the
Metropolitan Museum from
May 10 through August 17*

FRONTISPIECE:

*Mask, New Guinea, Mabuiag
Island, discussed on page 399*

ON THE COVER:

*Standing figure, Mexico,
Veracruz: Remojadas, discussed on
page 409*

works themselves, if “primitive” implies material coarseness, poorly controlled craft, or poverty of concept. As with any art, the first step to appreciation is the recognition of how craft has been used toward a desired result. In all the works reproduced here a highly skilled technique, long developed in the society, has been employed to create a unified form of expressive intensity. On the other hand, the form, being unfamiliar, may seem harsh and ugly, and the meaning, being strange and distant, may appear incomprehensible. Can we really come close to works that stem from traditions so far removed from our own?

In this respect, these arts are no different from others, now more familiar. For the arts of “civilization,” both East and West, we have come to accept both aesthetic and cultural relativism. We no longer consider the Gothic barbaric because it is unlike the classic, nor do we dismiss the arts of Asia as heathen. We are aware that art has many contexts and uses and employs many styles, each of which has its own validity. We know that some understanding of its culture can help us to judge the art according to its own standards and intentions. By correcting our own naturally subjective view we move toward the enlarging satisfactions of a more informed enjoyment. The same is true for the arts of the so-called primitive cultures, but the understanding is somewhat harder to attain. The art forms, and the social and religious attitudes and values that they embody and express, even less familiar than those of antiquity or the Middle Ages, call for a new knowledge and imagination. But the effort required is of the same kind, and its rewards are just as great.

We often forget that to put any of the world’s art in a museum is to take it out of its intended environment. Nevertheless, whatever its cultural source, whatever its function, and whatever the style in which its message is couched, it continues to possess certain inherent qualities through which it remains accessible and meaningful. These are the qualities of skill, of design, of expressive form and concentrated emotion that make it art. Even, or perhaps especially, when isolated in a museum setting these qualities can cross cultural boundaries – as much so for the arts of Oceania, Africa, and the Americas as for any other art.

The captions for these illustrations were written by three staff members of The Museum of Primitive Art: Douglas Newton wrote on Oceania, Robert Goldwater on Africa, and Julie Jones on the Americas. The photographs for Figures 2 and 6 were made by Lisa Little of The Museum of Primitive Art; those for the cover, frontispiece, and Figure 15 by the Photograph Studio, Metropolitan Museum; and the remainder by Charles Uht, New York

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1. **Mask.** *New Guinea, Mabuiag Island. Turtleshell, clamshell, wood, cassowary feathers, seeds, and paint, width 25 inches. 67.48. Illustrated in color as the frontispiece*

Oceania

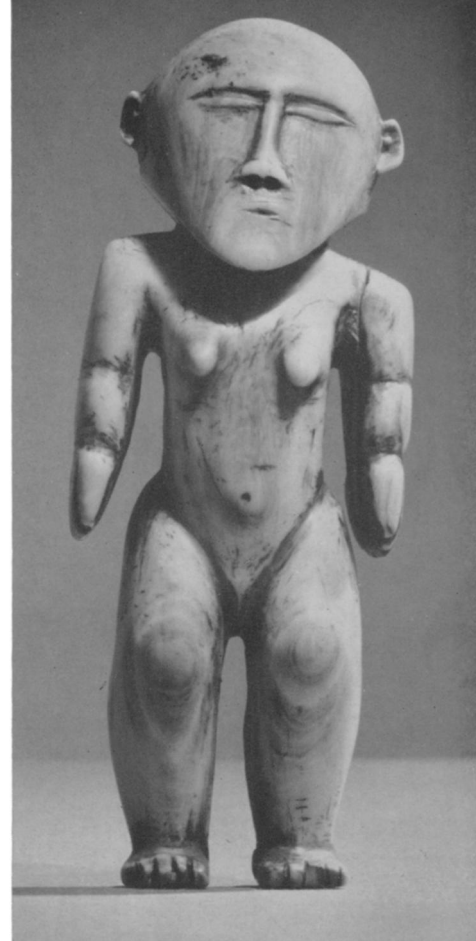
New Guinea turtleshell masks were made only on the numerous small islands off the south coast in the Torres Straits. Several types existed; they were worn for funerals and various other ceremonies, including those to promote fertility. Some masks had a human face surmounted by an animal; this example displays a kind of gull called a frigate bird. The islanders were fairly homogeneous in social organization despite language differences, and they shared several culture traits, such as commemoration of ancestral heroes, and initiation and mortuary rituals, with other areas of New Guinea.



RIGHT:

2. **Female figure.** *Tonga Islands, Haapai Group. Whale ivory, height $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches. 57.108*

Although this figure was acquired on the island of Viti Levu in the Fiji Islands in 1868, its style is that of the Haapai Group, where the object undoubtedly was carved, probably early in the nineteenth century. This figure and seven like it in bone or ivory exhibit the traits—simplified form, stocky body, and disproportionately large head—typical of the relatively rare Polynesian figure sculpture. A small lug at the back of the head indicates that the figure was either a pendant or was suspended in some fashion, but the figure's meaning is unknown. The ivory may have been obtained from whalers.



OPPOSITE PAGE:

4. **Female figure.** *New Guinea, Sepik District: Southern Abelam. Painted wood, height $42\frac{1}{2}$ inches. 62.158*

The stylistic features of this figure indicate that it was made by the Abelam, a people who inhabit the mountains and river areas of the Sepik District. Most of the Abelam have been converted to Christianity, but they continue many of their indigenous religious practices, specializing in cults of yam harvesting.

This female figure is probably of the type used in Abelam initiation ceremonies. The initiates (young boys) crawl between the legs of the figure into a narrow tunnel lined with paintings of designs representing ancestors. The paint adhering to their bodies as they rub past the pictures is supposed to contribute magically to their growth.

LEFT:

3. **Weaver's peg.** *New Zealand: Maori. Wood, height $14\frac{5}{8}$ inches. 61.78*

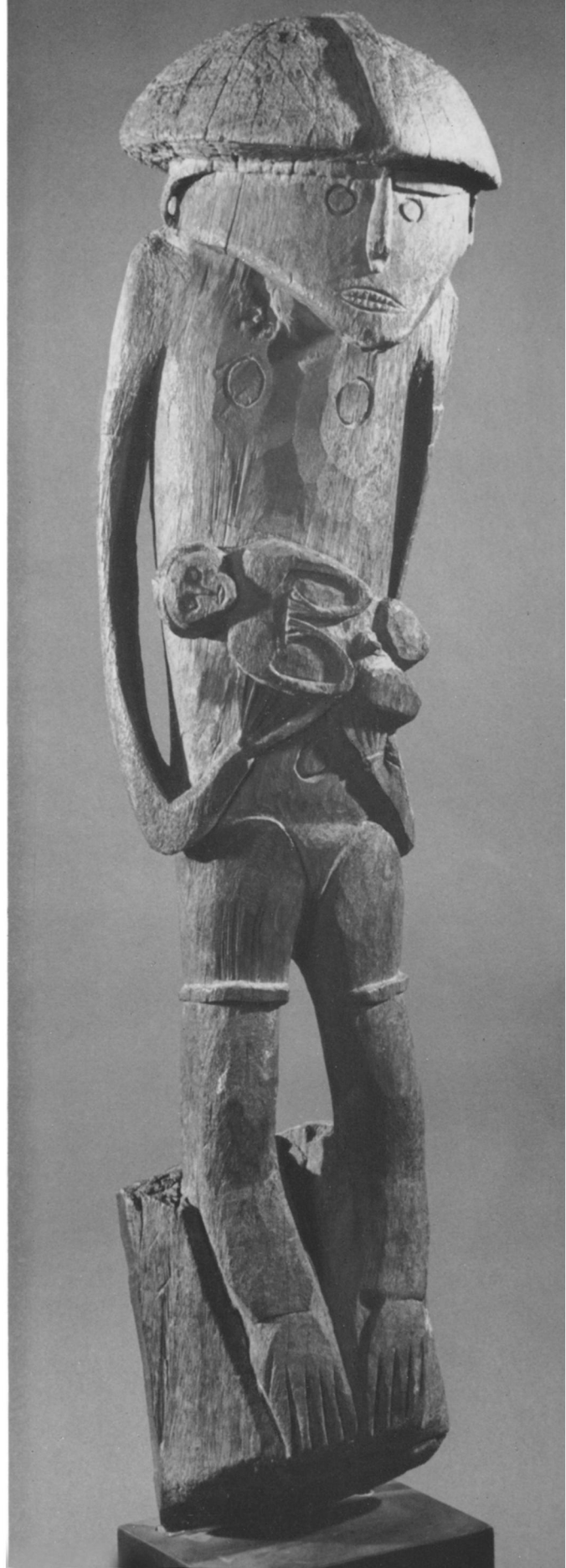
The Maori weaver used two pegs, which were thrust into the ground to secure the top edge of the work. Most weaving was performed by women, and the pegs were made by male carvers. The right-hand peg (*turuturu*), like this one, was usually carved into an abstract human figure and was sacred (*tapu*); the other was uncarved, lacked *tapu*, and was called *noa*. Such oversized square heads accompanied by vigorous curvilinear relief carving may be found on Maori objects as diverse as this small implement, canoe prows, and architectural structures.





5. **Mask.** *New Guinea, Sepik District: Sawos tribe. Wood, paint, shell, and reed, height 23½ inches. 65.44*

This mask (*mei*) is an abstract representation of a human face with an elongated nose displaying typical boar's-tusk nose ornaments and a braided nose decoration. For ritual reasons, *mei* masks had to be made by the wearer's mother's brother. The masks were worn during pageants enacted by young men impersonating pairs of ancestral brothers and sisters. Ceremonies in which prisoners were killed by initiated boys were held under the leadership of an adult *mei* masquerader, who struck the first blow. There is also some evidence that on raids, which had religious importance for most New Guinea tribes, *mei* were shaken in the direction of the enemy to ensure the raiders' invulnerability.



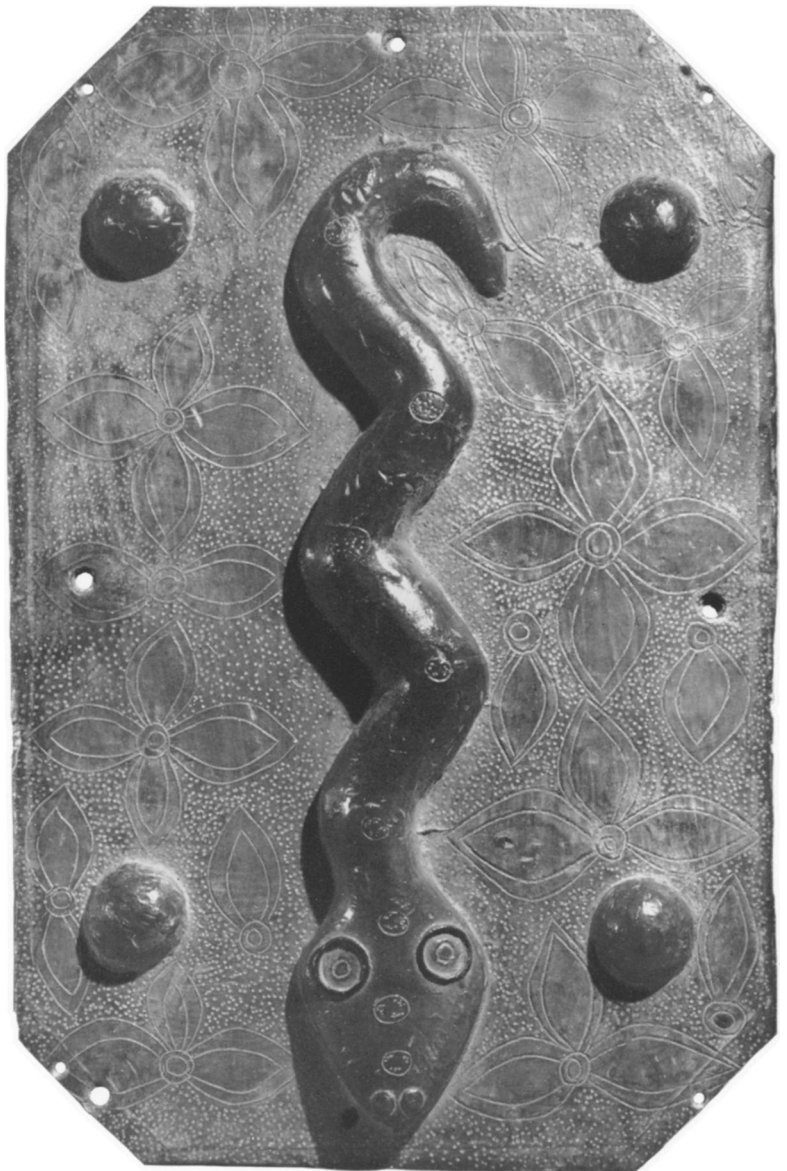
6. **House-post figure.** *New Guinea, Lake Sentani: Kabitau. Wood, height 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches.* 56.225

The inhabitants of Lake Sentani lived in houses constructed on piles in the lake. The upper ends of posts, projecting above the flooring of jetties and into the houses of chiefs, were carved with decorative figures, some of which probably represented ancestors. This one depicts a mother and child, a common motif in New Guinea carving. When this area of New Guinea was Christianized about fifty years ago, such old images were destroyed, but about sixty, of which this is one, were found submerged in the lake in 1929.

Africa

7. **Plaque.** *Nigeria, Benin: Bini. Bronze, height 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.* 58.254

Works of art from the former kingdom of Benin (consisting primarily of the Bini people) have been among the most celebrated from West Africa. The Benin artistic tradition, having its origins in the classical naturalism of the bronzes and terracottas of neighboring Ife, lasted for more than five hundred years down to the end of the last century. Guilds of bronze casters and of ivory carvers worked only for the king and his courtiers, making idealized portrait heads, commemorative masks, and figures, as well as reliefs. Olfert Dapper, a Dutch traveler who visited Benin City in the seventeenth century, tells us that plaques of this type with a wide range of subjects covered the wooden pillars of the royal palace and decorated the wide central avenue. This plaque depicts a serpent and four eggs, and it dates from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century. Serpents like this one are related to water and fertility in the religious symbolism of many West African peoples.

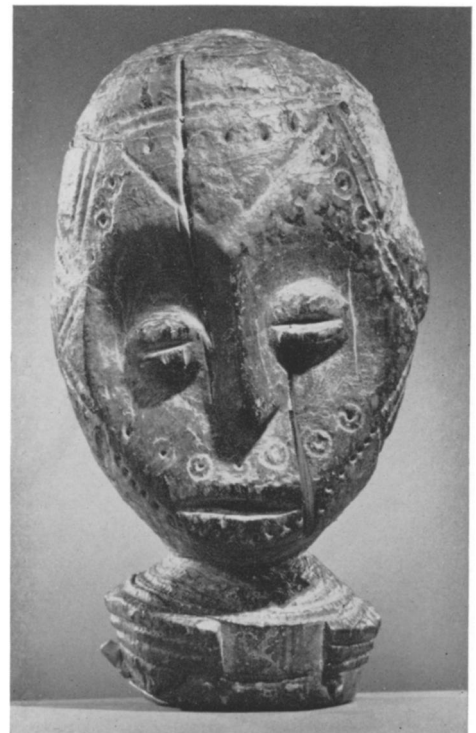




8. Rhythm pounder. *Ivory Coast: Senufo. Wood, height 42½ inches. 58.7*

The style of the Senufo sculptors of the northern Ivory Coast has been known for some time through examples of small figures and masks. But large sculptures have until recently been jealously guarded from profane eyes in the sacred grove of each Senufo village. It was not until a "revival cult" in the early 1950s induced many Senufo to abandon the ancient sanctuaries and release the sculptures that the quality, quantity, and variety of Senufo production became apparent.

This male figure is one of a pair found in 1954 in Lataha village, Korhogo district. In a fashion that is characteristic of many African figures, it stands with its legs apparently sunk into the base. This is one of a type of figures known as "rhythm pounders" (*déblé*), whose especially heavy bases play a particular functional role. These figures are also characterized by their small heads and long arms and torsos. Essential in Senufo funeral rites, the figures are lifted under their arms by newly initiated members of the men's secret society and are pounded on the earth in a slow rhythm. The sound invokes the earth goddess, purifying the earth and helping to render it fertile again. The sound also summons the souls of ancestors, inviting them to participate in the ceremonies, to transmit their power to the society, and to take their proper place among the dead. These impressive rhythm pounders, like most of the sculpture of the Senufo and the Bambara, are carved by a special caste of artisans who are both blacksmiths and sculptors.



9. Head for a reliquary. *Gabon: Fang. Wood, height 18¼ inches. 61.283*

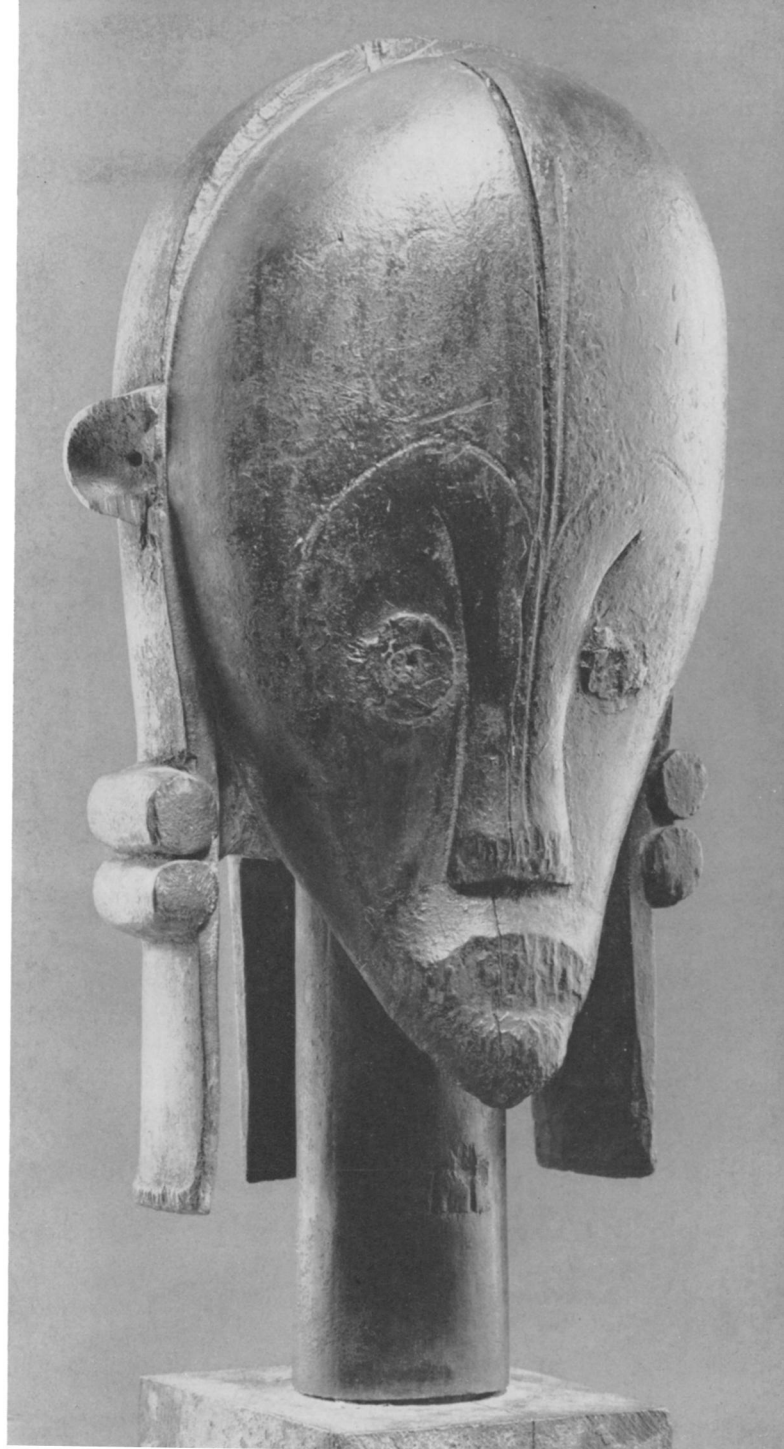
The figures and heads carved by the Fang people were among the first African works to be admired by Western artists in Paris early in this century. The sculptor Jacob Epstein, who in 1912 had begun to form an excellent collection of African and Oceanic art, acquired this head in the late 1930s.

These Fang heads are carved from hard wood and deeply impregnated with palm oil, giving them a rich and dark patina. In their simplified contour and round eyes set within a heart-shaped face there is an expression of a mysterious presence. They are, however, the embodiment of the continuity and force of an ancestral lineage. They are set in bark boxes that hold the bones and skull of the deceased along with a variety of beneficent objects. The *bieri* (box and head or figure) is kept in the house of the family head as a powerful protective spirit. On occasion bieris are brought out by the elders and shown to the young men of the village, who are then, through the bieris, brought into communication with their ancestors.

LEFT:

10. Head. *Congo (Kinshasa): Lega. Ivory, height 8¾ inches. 61.65*

The Lega tribe is located just northwest of Lake Tanganyika. Lega sculpture has been the subject of speculation by art historians and ethnologists alike. Some consider Lega art to be an extension of what is summarily referred to as northern Congo sculpture; others think its primary influence is from the Luba, prolific neighbors to the south of the Lega. The masks and faces of Lega figures are distinguished by an elongated heart shape, a circle-dot motif, and by their medium – ivory. Though some Lega sculpture is made of wood, by far the majority is carved in ivory and bone. The dark brown coloration of this head may indicate considerable use of the object, although such patination is not by itself a sure sign of age. The head, originally adorned with a fiber cap, was used by the Lega to denote rank in the *Bwame*, their peaceloving association open to men who have successfully completed various initiations and their wives.



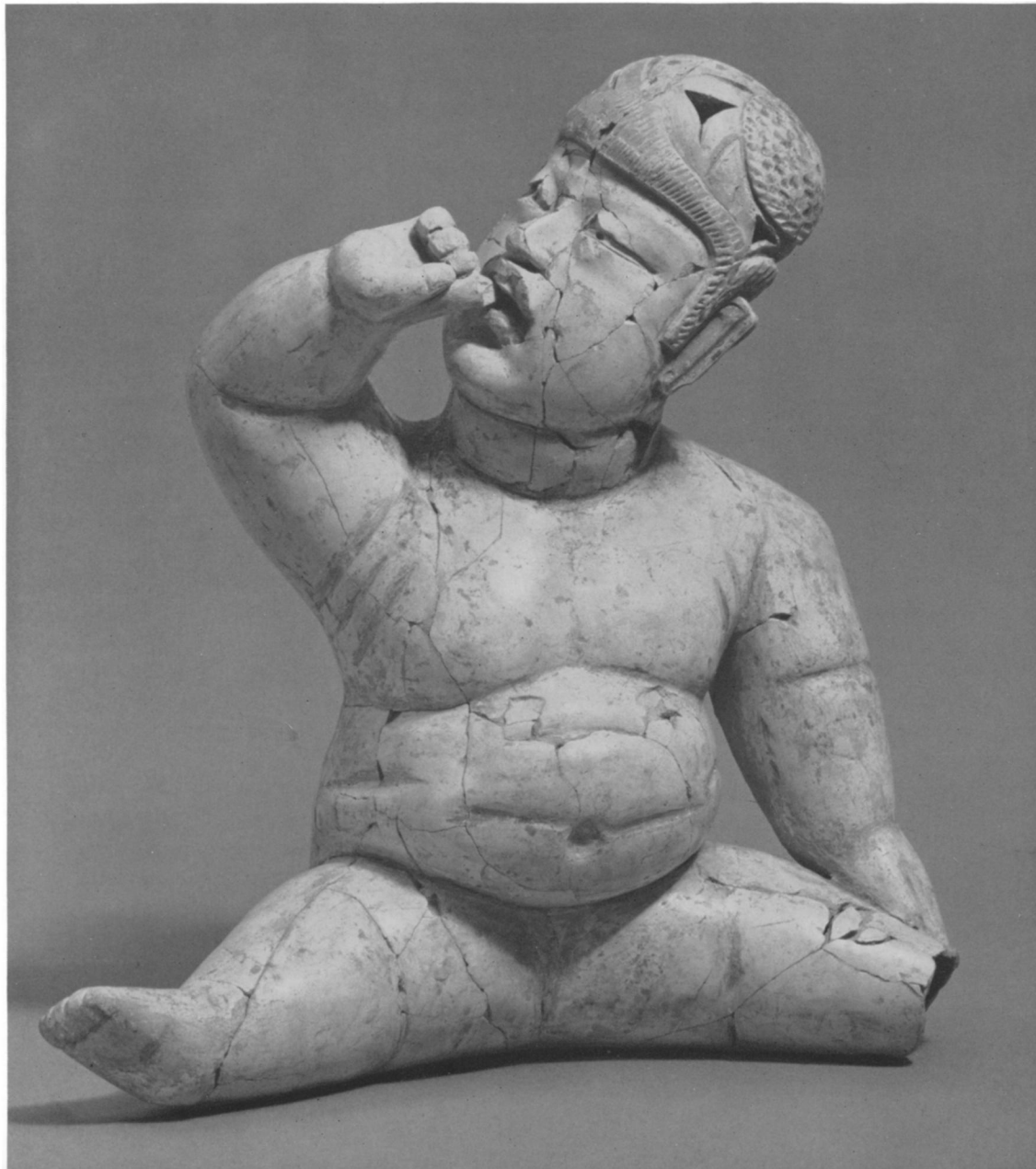


11. **Headpiece.** *Mali: Bambara. Wood, height 28 inches. 61.249*

The many stylized openwork antelopes carved by the Bambara of the Republic of Mali are among the most popular of African carvings. They were made by men who specialized in sculpture and smithery. Although they appear decorative and lighthearted, they had an important ritual function. They were worn as headpieces (*tji wara*), attached to basketwork caps, by young men during sowing and harvest ceremonies that protected the fertility of the crops. They appeared in male-female pairs – this female is accompanied by a baby – their wearers' bodies hidden by black raffia costumes. The antelope is said to be one form of the water spirit who is, quite naturally, given homage by the farmers. Their rendering varies with the region where they were made: this one is vertical and fairly naturalistic, others are horizontal, and some are highly abstract in treatment.

12. Seated figure. *Mexico, Puebla, Las Bocas. Clay and red pigment, height 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. 65.28*

The earliest important civilization of Mesoamerica was the Olmec of Mexico, its origins dating to the late second millennium B.C. At home on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, the Olmecs influenced many distant areas, among them the high plateaus of central Mexico. The highland site of Las Bocas in the state of Puebla is well known for its Olmec-style ceramics. Significant among these ceramics are the almost-life-size and quite realistic “baby” figures, which are closely related to the half-human, half-jaguar Olmec were-jaguars. Both baby figures and werejaguars are thought to be early forms of the great gods of Mexico. The baby figures are white to pale yellow in color. After firing, many of the figures were decorated with red pigment; this one has red on its helmet.





13. **Altar.** *Mexico: Olmec. Stone, height 20 inches. 57.7*

In Mexico, altars—large, carved, usually round stones that frequently represented animals and appear together with stelae—were first used in late Olmec times. This example, which dates to the late first millennium B.C., has the features of a jaguar, one of the most important elements of Olmec iconography. Although its exact provenance is unknown, it is possible that this Olmec altar comes from the highland area along the Pacific coast of Chiapas and Guatemala. Stelae and their associated altars were usually erected to commemorate important events and were most particularly favored later among the Maya.

14. Vessel. *Peru: Recuay. Clay with slip, height 8¾ inches. 66.14*

The ceramic vessel forms of ancient Peru were many. Those of Recuay style were elaborate and frequently included groups of small figures. On this vessel the large figure (perhaps a warrior or chief) wears a headdress, ear plugs, and a necklace, and is lying on his stomach. Around him female figures hold cups and two male figures present him with a llama. The surface decoration of the vessel includes both slip and negative painting. The Recuay style was centered in the highland area of the Santa River valley of central Peru and is currently thought to date from 300 B.C. to A.D. 700.



15: Standing figure. *Mexico, Veracruz: Remojadas. Clay, height 18¾ inches. 69.5. Illustrated in color on the cover*

This ceramic sculpture is one of the “smiling figures” of Veracruz, which are among the few seemingly lighthearted human representations from ancient Mexico. Complete examples are extremely rare, and ones like this with a rattle in one hand are thought to represent dancers. They date to the classic period, A.D. 300 to 900. These figures were first found in some quantity in the early 1950s and are stylistically named for the site, Remojadas in central Veracruz, with which they were first definitely associated.



16. Plaque. *Peru: Chimu. Silver, diameter 13 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. 65.110*

No area of pre-Columbian America produced as many objects of precious metal as Peru. Pre-Hispanic Indian tombs have been looted for centuries, and only in recent years have their gold and silver contents escaped the melting pot. This embossed silver plaque is one of several similar examples believed to have been found in the same tomb. It is closely related in workmanship and style to many other silver objects dated between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries from the area of Chan Chan, the Chimu capital on the north coast of Peru. This plaque, showing birds, monkeys, snakes, standing figures with headdresses, and combinations of animals, was probably made especially to go into the tomb.



17. Standing figure. *British Columbia: Kwakiutl. Wood, height 50 inches. 56.205*

The art of the Northwest Coast of America was one of the most dynamic of the Indian arts of North America. It was an art largely, but not exclusively, made of wood, and the bulk of it was produced during the nineteenth century. Most of the art was made for the Indians' complex ceremonial life, and it featured totemic animals. Realistic, delicate carvings of human figures were few; this female figure is one of the more serene examples. Produced in the Kwakiutl tribe of British Columbia, its exact function is unknown; it was probably made late in the nineteenth century.



A Forgotten Record of Turkish Exotica

ALEXANDRINE ST. CLAIR

Formerly Curatorial Assistant, Department of Prints

We are all familiar with noted artists from the past whose reputations have suffered reversals over the centuries. Other talented masters even during their careers were ignored, neglected, or misunderstood. Various events, some insignificant, some momentous, such as war, a woman's fancy, an emperor's whim, good fortune or ill, have brought about the ruin of promising apprentices, protégés, and established masters. Looking back through history we find they have vanished and the facts of their later years remain shrouded in speculation.

One such unfortunate craftsman was Melchior Lorichs of the Danish town of Flensburg. He was a restless man of numerous talents whose great aspirations commanded his entire life's energy. Lorichs was born in 1526 or 1527 of noble parentage. He had the benefit of a good education and an apprenticeship with a goldsmith in Lübeck.

The young artist wasted no time in launching his ambitious career. In 1547-1548 he established contact with the court of the Holy Roman Empire at the Diet of Augsburg by entering the employ of the deposed Count Palatine Ott Heinrich and, oddly, the man given control of Ott Heinrich's domain, Otto Truchsess von Waldburg, Bishop of Augsburg. Apparently not satisfied with these conquests, Lorichs contrived an agreement early in 1549 with King Christian III of Denmark whereby the king—long acquainted with Lorichs's family—consented to support Lorichs for four years of study in Italy. In return, Lorichs promised that he would settle in Denmark, but he dallied in Nuremberg for a year before carrying out the contract. During that year he illustrated a broadsheet with a poem by Hans Sachs entitled *Sibilla Tiburtina*. Lorichs extended his Italian sojourn to 1553,

and then, further ignoring his agreement with King Christian, he sought out his former patron Ott Heinrich, who had been reinstated and was at his residence in Neuburg. Lorichs's failure to return to Denmark in 1552 as agreed had brought swift retaliation from Christian, who commanded the city of Flensburg to withhold the funds due Lorichs from his late sister's estate. Lorichs may thus have foreseen more promise in returning to his reestablished patron than to the angry Danish king.

During this period of involvement with the court of the Holy Roman Empire, Lorichs appears to have succeeded in arousing Emperor Ferdinand I's displeasure rather than his patronage. Ferdinand ordered him to join the entourage of Augier Ghiselin de Busbecq, chief of the embassy sent to the court of Sulayman the Magnificent in 1554 to settle a dispute over the control of Siebenbürgen. The purpose of Lorichs's presence on this arduous mission to the Ottoman Empire is unknown, but a later letter by Ferdinand I, written in February 1564, indicated that the suffering and hardship caused Lorichs were results that had been anticipated by the Emperor. Busbecq does not enlighten us on this matter, as he never mentioned the artist in his private correspondence, which was published in 1589.

During his stay in Turkey, Lorichs developed an enduring interest in the East and its relationships to Europe. On his return to Vienna in 1559, he immediately wrote a poem, *Liedt vom Türcken und Antichrist*. Lorichs sensed that a perpetual friction between East and West was unavoidable, and the *Liedt* expressed his strong feeling that the West must be well informed about the Turks, particularly about their military prowess and equipment.



1. Title page, 1575, by Melchior Lorichs for his Turkish source book. Woodcut, $16\frac{1}{16} \times 13\frac{13}{16}$ inches. Reproduced from Melchior Lorichs: *Drawings from the Evelyn Collection at Stonor Park, England, and from The Department of Prints and Drawings, The Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Copenhagen* (Copenhagen, 1962), by Erik Fischer

Within a few years of his return, Lorichs also wrote a book that he called *Soldan Soleyman Türckischen Khayzers . . . wahre und eigendliche Contrafectung und Bildtnuss* [A true and proper picture and likeness of Sultan Sulayman, Emperor of Turkey]. It contained an autobiography, a dedicatory letter to the new Danish king, Frederick II, and a brief political and military description of Turkey.

Other aspects of his infinite fascination for Turkey are exemplified by the numerous drawings Lorichs brought back; the variety of subjects he sketched demonstrates the scope of his interests. Military costume and weapons were his primary concern, but he also recorded modes of transportation, marriage and burial customs, tradesmen, and the trappings of beasts of burden as well as costume and architecture. He also portrayed sultanas, but these pictures were probably inventions, as women's faces were carefully concealed from the gaze of all but their husbands. Most of his observations were of a practical nature, but at times he became intrigued by peculiarities – the legendary harpy, for example – associated with Is-

lamic traditions and concepts. In spite of his conviction that accurate knowledge of the Turks was vital to Europe, eleven years were to pass before Lorichs began to prepare these copious drawings for publication.

During the 1560s Lorichs was again involved in jockeying for the attention of the royal houses of Denmark and Austria. Christian III, Lorichs's former Danish patron, had died in 1559, and his brother Hans, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, wrote to Lorichs in Vienna requesting his services. Lorichs complied and used this commission as an entrée to Frederick II, Hans's nephew and Denmark's new king. In 1563, while still in the circle of the imperial court, Lorichs sent a letter describing his career as an artist, followed by samples of his work, to King Frederick as part of an attempt at reinstatement. The results were favorable, and in the same year Frederick awarded Lorichs a large subvention. Despite this victory, Lorichs remained in Vienna and continued to satisfy the pleasure of the Hapsburg royalty. He designed triumphal arches for the entry into Vienna in 1563 of Maximilian, new King of the Romans and heir presumptive to the imperial throne. A title page and two inscribed designs for fountains indicate that Lorichs had also been preparing a publication to commemorate the event. A year later a coat of arms was granted to Lorichs's family and a letter from Maximilian's father, Emperor Ferdinand, confirmed and renewed the nobility of the



four Lorichs brothers. The letter, in addition to remarking on the regrettable suffering Lorichs endured during his Turkish sojourn, praised Lorichs's painting ability and "the vast buildings" he had designed. The latter remarks raise a question: these buildings are unknown and we have no evidence of any other work Lorichs may have done for the Emperor.

Lorichs's oscillation between the two monarchies was the sole subject of a letter from the new Emperor, Maximilian, to King Frederick, dated December 1, 1566. Their decision about their problematical protégé is unknown, but in 1567 Lorichs went north to Hamburg and became involved in the construction of the Scar-tor, a city gate, and undertook cartographical projects.

At this time, and during the 1570s, Lorichs turned his attentions to a creative expansion of his earlier Turkish experiences. While in Hamburg he had his *Liedt vom Türcken und Antichrist* published, and his *Soldan Soleyman* was published in Antwerp in 1574. In 1570, he began to formulate plans for his most ambitious project, *Wolgerissene und geschnittene Figuren . . .* [Well-engraved and cut figures], a book of Turkish subjects that was to be a compilation of prints from the sketches he had made more than a decade earlier. Lorichs clearly intended the book for artists and lovers of the arts. His illustrations were to provide them with accurate observations for subjects whose details they often improvised. Over a period

of thirteen years beginning in 1570, the original sketches were redrawn in a less fluid manner more suitable for woodcutting and the inscriptions upon the sketches were transposed to these working drawings, probably in preparation for an explanatory text that was never realized. We do not know the exact number of drawings Lorichs made or the number redrawn for the publication, but each of the known copies of the book contains about 125 woodcuts; most are approximately nine by six inches. Lorichs's 1575 title page (Figure 1) is considerably larger than most of the published woodcuts, lending support to the contention that Lorichs planned to accompany each illustration with a text.

On May 19, 1575, Lorichs wrote to Frederick II, requesting subsidies for this project, for which he had already made printing arrangements and invested in paper. His efforts failed, however, and Lorichs was never able to persuade either of his royal patrons to directly support this valuable publication. This is peculiar, for at that time the menace of the Turks was paramount and European curiosity was at a peak. Furthermore, source books and similar publications providing ideas for artists were popular and had a wide circulation. *Enchiridion Artis pingendi, fingendi & sculpendi . . .* [Manual of the arts of painting, modeling, and sculpting], one of several such source books by Lorichs's famous contemporary, Jost Amman, was first issued in 1578 and went



OPPOSITE PAGE:

2. Polish mercenary or delly. From the Turkish source book by Melchior Lorichs, (born 1526 or 1527), Danish. Woodcut, 9½ x 6¼ inches. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 32.86

LEFT AND ABOVE:

- 3, 4. Detail, and complete end panel from *Entrata in Roma dell' eccel^{mo} Ambasciatore di Polonea*, by Stefano della Bella (1610-1664), Italian. Etching, 6 x 16½ inches. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 47.100.779

through three more editions by the turn of the century. Lorichs, too, had begun to compile drawings for at least one other type of source book – on world costume, both ancient and contemporary. He worked on this concurrently with the Turkish source book until 1574, when he abandoned the costume book to devote most of his time to the other volume.

Even though royalty had declined to support the Turkish publication, it is strange that some enterprising publisher did not seek to issue these accurate and useful woodcuts. Lorichs traveled widely and knew many influential publishers, among them Sigmund Feyerabend of Frankfurt, whose praise for Lorichs was expressed in the dedications of two separate publications. During his 1573–1574 visit to Antwerp, Lorichs established a relationship with Christophe Plantin, designing five plates for Plantin's 1575 Roman Missal. It was in Antwerp that Lorichs's *Soldan Soleyman* was published by Gillis Coppens van Diest. These men could have seized the opportunity to use Lorichs's woodcuts, but the works remained virtually unknown until they were published by Michael Hering in Hamburg in 1626, forty-three years after the last block was cut and probably more than a quarter century after Lorichs's death. In 1646 they were published again, this time by Tobias Gundermann of Hamburg. An inscription with the date 1619 added to the 1575 title page is an indication that the cuts were intended for publication in 1619. Unfortunately, however, no copy of such an edition exists.

Even after their publication, the woodcuts do not appear to have had any great impact. The works of contemporary artists – volumes on travel and costume, and designs for theatrical presentations and fêtes – show no knowledge of Lorichs's work. By contrast, a popular travel book by Nicholas de Nicolay issued in 1568 was reprinted in several languages and was the direct model for numerous plates in Abraham de Bruyn's famous *Omnium pene Europae, Asiae, Africae atque Americae gentium habitus* . . . [The costumes of all people in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America] (Antwerp, 1581).

Scarce indeed is any evidence that Lorichs's Turkish woodcuts did not slip into obscurity. Rembrandt mentioned "Turkish buildings by Melchior Lorichs, Hendrick van Aelst and others illustrating Turkish life" in item number 234 of an inventory he made in 1656. He did not, however, borrow any of Lorichs's motifs, preferring the actual costumes in his collection for inspiration.

Only one possible exception to Lorichs's lack of influence appears in an etching by the versatile Stefano della Bella. In his six-paneled etching recording the Polish am-

bassador's entry into Rome in 1633, is a delly whose pose and trappings are not unlike those of a delly rendered by Lorichs (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). The differences are primarily stylistic, and one might be tempted to assume that della Bella had seen Lorichs's detailed woodcut of this fierce Polish mercenary. Della Bella witnessed the lengthy procession, however, and was practiced at swift, accurate sketching. Furthermore, he relied upon his own inspiration and was not often inclined to borrow from other artists. Yet one cannot entirely dismiss the possibility. By 1633 the Hamburg edition of Lorichs's *Wolgerissene und geschnittene Figuren* had been in circulation for seven years.

In the late nineteenth century Raphael Jacquemine copied three of Lorichs's woodcuts for his *Iconographie Générale et Méthodique . . . du IV au XIX siècle*. With Victorian superficiality, Jacquemine credited Lorichs but did not indicate where he had seen the woodcuts.

We know more about Lorichs's work during the 1570s than during any other period. Later evidence about him is scant indeed: in 1580 he was finally appointed court painter to King Frederick II; he received regular payments, enabling him to produce woodcuts from his Turkish drawings more steadily than he had done at any time since he began this work a decade before; and he made a portrait of the king for an engraving that he produced in 1582. It is to our surprise, therefore, that in the same year Frederick issued a decree withdrawing Lorichs's subvention. The last payment was made on March 4, 1583, and from that time on Lorichs disappears from the pages of history. We have no further record of him with the exception of two inscribed drawings dated 1583: one a woman of Nigeria and the other a woman of Gambia. Perhaps Lorichs took one step too far in toying with royalty, or perhaps his restless nature enticed him to abandon his devious games and seek adventure investigating the Gold Coast.

Despite his versatility, his conniving, his connections with royalty, and his great reputation with artists, poets, publishers, and humanists, Lorichs never did clearly establish himself, and he slipped off into obscurity without ever seeing the completion of his most earnest endeavor, the Turkish source book.

Like its creator, the *Wolgerissene und geschnittene Figuren* is now lost in obscurity. We do not know how many copies were produced by Hering or Gundermann, but only five, none exactly alike, exist today. One of these books has been in the Metropolitan's collection since 1932, but it is relatively unknown since, with the exception of a few cuts, it has not been published

previously. It consists of 125 woodcuts on 117 leaves; it has no title page; and, like the other four, it has no text. The copy in the Albertina in Vienna contains a list of subjects, not precisely keyed to the illustrations; and this was not added by the author but by Tobias Gundermann for his 1646 edition.

Clues to the meaning of many of the plates are given by a seventeenth-century author, E. G. Happel, who used a majority of Lorichs's woodcuts (with monogram and date erased) rather than commission new pictures for the Turkish portion of his travel book, *Thesaurus Exoticorum oder eine mit Ausländischen Raritäten und Geschichten Wohlversehene Schatzkammer Fürstend Die Asiatischen Africanischen und Americanischen Nationes* . . . [An exotic thesaurus or a complete treasury of curiosities and history from the foreign lands of Asia, Africa, and America] (Hamburg, Thomas von Wiering, 1688). Despite unexplained differences with Lorichs that Happel alluded to in his introduction and an interim of more than one hundred years since Lorichs's Turkish adventures, Happel did not shrink from using the woodcuts to illustrate his commentary. One is tempted to surmise that in most cases the prints determined his selection of topic.

Much of Happel's narrative seems to have been drawn directly from another chronicle about the East, *Der Türkische Schauplatz*, issued three years earlier by Happel's publisher. The anonymous author of this work—most likely Happel himself—cites the *Voyages en Turquie, en Perse et aux Indes* (Paris, 1677) by the famous traveler, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, as one of his principal sources, thereby identifying for us one of the ultimate sources for the Turkish section of the *Thesaurus Exoticorum*. In his introduction Happel justified and defended his extensive borrowing from other authors, but he failed to mention *Der Türkische Schauplatz* on which he had depended so heavily.

The captions for the following illustrations from the Metropolitan Museum's copy of Lorichs's Turkish book are partially derived from Happel's ideas and interpretations. His observations are inclined to be inaccurate but are a fascinating revelation of a European's view of the East. Lorichs, too, gives a European's view of Turkey, but he conscientiously tried to provide a complete and accurate portrayal of what he observed, as the

woodcuts reproduced here demonstrate. They show that Lorichs's neglected book is significant not only as a testimony to a forgotten artist's ability but also as a visual record of a culture of major interest to Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and still of great interest today.

NOTES

I would like to thank Mrs. John H. Sichel for her kind assistance in reviewing my translations and interpreting several difficult passages.

The amended 1575 title page of Lorichs's source book reads: *Wolgerissene und geschnittene Figuren in Kupffer und Holtz durch den kunstreichen und weißüberübten Melcher Lorch für die Mahler, Bildthawer und Kunstliebenden an Tag gegeben Anno 1619*. It implies that he intended to include engravings as well as woodcuts.

Jost Amman's source book, *Enchiridion Artis pingendi, fingendi & sculpendi: In quod Thesaurus nouus & ingens, variarum figurarum, virorū mulierum, infantum & animalium, in usum adolescentia cupida adeoque omnium artis huius amantium est congestus* (Frankfurt, 1578), is also in the Metropolitan Museum. The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 49.10.

The travel book by Nicholas de Nicolay is called *Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et pérégrinations orientales* . . . (Lyons, 1568). The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 57.521.

Some of those who paid tribute to Lorichs are listed here:

Sigmund Feyerabend, the publisher, in 1564 composed an encomium on Lorichs that he later printed as a dedication to Hans Bocksburger's *Neuwe Biblische Figuren*. . . . In 1577 he dedicated another of his publications, *Türkische Chronica*, to Lorichs.

Conrad Leicht wrote a poem in 1567 praising Lorichs's *Liedt vom Türcken und Antichrist*.

Philippe Galle dedicated to Lorichs his first edition (1574) of twenty-four engravings of fountains after Hans Vredeman de Vries.

Hubert Goltzius included verse lauding Lorichs by Adolph Mekerch, Louis Carrion, and André du Pape in his book *Sicilia et Magna Graecia* (Bruges, 1576).

The dimensions (height x width in inches) of the woodcuts illustrated here are as follows:

Rider, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$; Janissary, $9\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{5}{16}$; *saquatz*, $8\frac{15}{16} \times 5\frac{7}{16}$; camel, $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{11}{16}$; coffins, $8 \times 5\frac{11}{16}$; cemetery, $8\frac{1}{8} \times 5\frac{15}{16}$; harpy, $9\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$; aerial view of mosque, $10 \times 14\frac{1}{2}$.

For information about the *simurgh*, see Eva Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art* (Jerusalem, Israel Oriental Society, 1965).



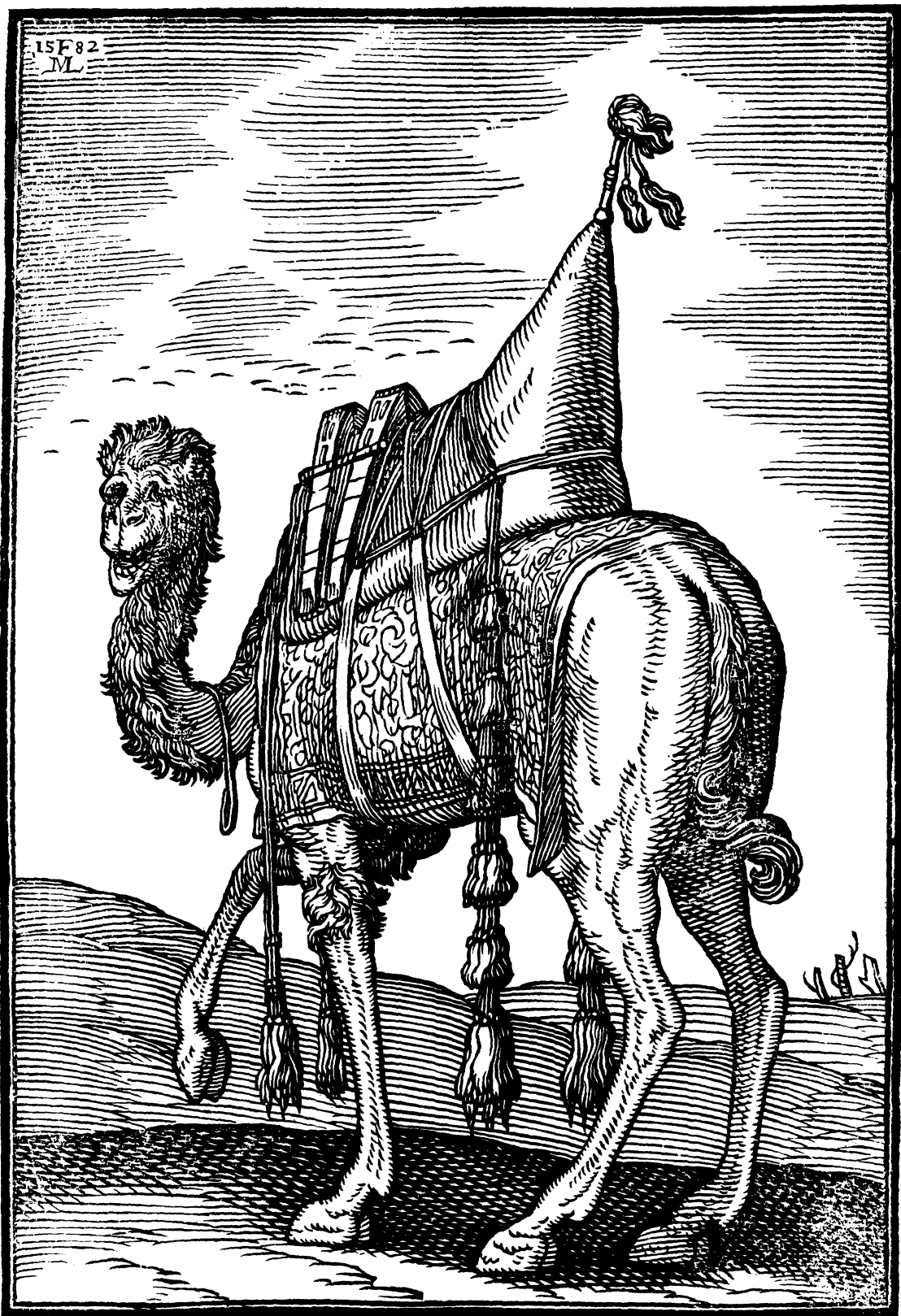
This rider enjoys the comforts of an ingenious rainhat fashioned with pleats to accommodate any size or shape of turban. He also wears a special, long, rainproof riding coat to protect the fine garments beneath.

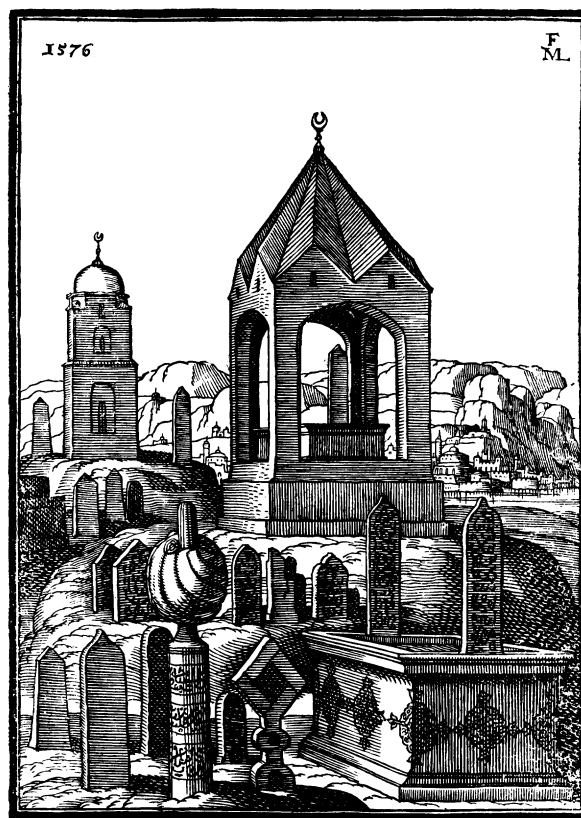
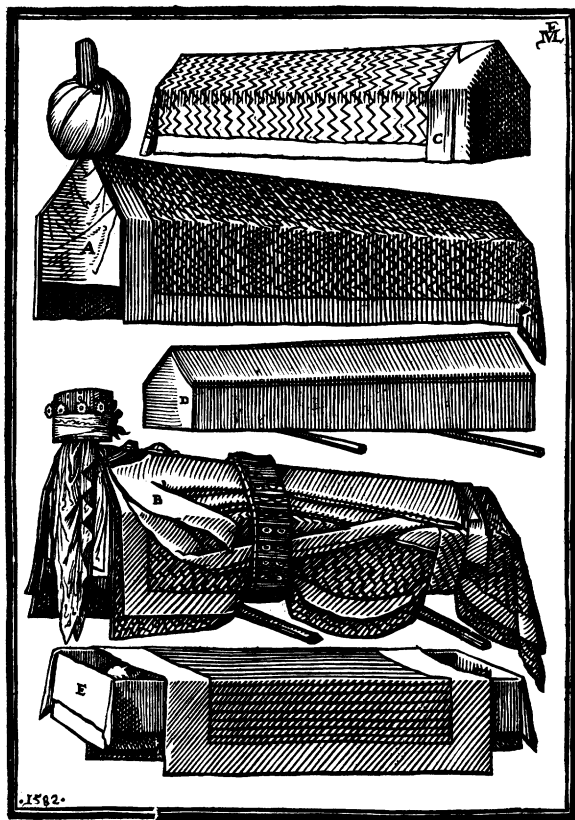
Janissaries' costumes differed according to their rank and position, and Lorichs sketched many of them for his comprehensive source book. This warrior wears their traditional emblem, a long cap said to represent the sleeve of their master, the sultan. The skirt of his kaftan is drawn up under his belt to facilitate movement. The jeweled, gilded-silver ornament at the front of his cap was usually the repository for a spoon, symbol of the Janissaries' dependence upon the sultan for their sustenance. Here it supports a mirror to which is attached a long feather that reaches almost to the ground. Happel explained this picture with an interesting tale about the Janissaries' plumage: These feathers were from the immense bird called *ruck*, which was so enormous that it seized elephants and dropped them to earth from the sky so that it could devour them more easily. Happel's source for this tale must have been based upon two traditional writings that describe a similar bird, the *simurgh*, king of the birds. It was a huge beast with sharp claws, a long tail "resembling the tower of Nimrod," and the same effective manner of destroying its prey. Aloft, its wings were like a ship's sails and their beat caused mountains to tremble.



Lorichs's detailed illustration of a *saquatz* (a water vendor) is a useful pendant to Happel's description, which was borrowed from that of Nicholas de Nicolay, the famous traveler whose *Navigations* had such an impact on the Western world. Despite his elegant appearance, the water vendor was a pilgrim dependent upon donations from those who enjoyed refreshment from the bag of water that hung under his arm. The water was drunk from a gilded bowl often richly decorated with lapis and other stones. While the recipient drank, the vendor held a mirror before him and exhorted him to consider his weaknesses and contemplate the prospect of death. Those who rewarded the pilgrim for his service were sprinkled on the face with scented water. The *saquatz* was not a passive peddler but pursued his customers with gifts of flowers and oranges. Nicolay related that he had been sought out at the French embassy by a crowd of vendors who would not depart until he replaced the small coins they gave him with coins of greater value. It was the custom of Muslims, who abstained from wine, to provide a fountain or well in front of their houses where anyone might drink. Lorichs's *saquatz* appears to be availing himself of this free source for his precious commodity.







The camel commanded much attention in travel literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Happel dutifully obliged his readers' curiosity with lengthy discussions of their strength, endurance, and longevity. We learn that the camel wore bells and his driver played the cymbals and sang in order to keep the music-loving animal in good spirits and less mindful of his fatigue. Happel selected this creature from Lorichs's woodcuts to illustrate an event he claims to have observed in Constantinople. A large crowd surrounded a camel that had just served on a pilgrimage to Mecca carrying the Koran on its back. The crowd kissed it, plucked out its hairs (to be prized as relics), and wiped the sweat from its body. Finally the beast was slain, and the flesh, which was considered holy because of the camel's task in the pilgrimage, was devoured on the spot by the crowd.

This ceremony is similar to the sacrifice of a camel in Mecca described by Adam Olearius in the 1669 English version of his *Voyages and Travells*. . . . Olearius's lengthy discussion of this event was probably Happel's actual source of information, although he says that he himself witnessed the beast's unhappy end.

Turkish burial habits had changed only slightly since the sixteenth century, so Happel could easily explain Lorichs's illustrations. The first picture, already marked by Lorichs for discussion, displays coffins designed to distinguish the identity of the occupants. The one marked A bears the decedent's turban and is intended for a male family head. B is draped in the garments and headdress of a wife or young woman; her braids were also customarily hung on the coffin. C is for an old wife or widow, D for a child, and E for a pauper. Wealthy Turks spared nothing in preparing elaborate tombs, which they thought would create a good impression in the afterlife. The destitute, on the other hand, were laid upon a plank by the roadside with face exposed so that some passerby might recognize the corpse and bury it.

No burial site was safe from the ravages of the wild, grave-robbing jackal. Coffins, even for the poor, were sunk deep, and huge stones were rolled over them for protection against the predator.

In the foreground of this graveyard stands a tombstone surmounted by a carved replica of the late Turk's turban. The various sizes and contours of turbans designated the wearers' rank or social position.



Harpy from Rayy, Persia. Late XII-early XIII century. Luster-painted pottery, height 25¼ inches. Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 57.51.1

One is startled to find among the numerous pages of detailed costumes and buildings a picture of a monstrous yet statuesque harpy. This fantastic beast was traditional in Muslim iconography but ordinarily appeared only as part of a decorative motif on ceramics, metalware, and textiles. An unusual piece in the Museum's collection, illustrated at the left, is a notable exception to the restrained decorative use of the harpy. This kind of imposing ceramic harpy from Rayy, Persia, would seem a likely source of inspiration, but such a figure is not known to have been made or used in Turkey. One can only speculate as to what inspired Lorichs's "portrait." He may have probed into the complex, intermingled tales surrounding the Islamic harpy, but it is also possible that he was interested in the harpy or siren of Greek tradition – he may have admired isolated, ornamental siren figures on pottery from the former Greek colonies in Asia Minor. In some details – such as the headdress and peacock tail – Lorichs's harpy resembles the *Anqā*, *Murgh-i-ādamī*, and *Bahrī* of Eastern origin. The knotting of the long tresses is not typical of the Muslim or Greek motifs. We do not know in what context Lorichs intended his harpy, but Happel offered an explanation, which he said was taken from the Koran. While on his famous Night Journey (*Mi'raj*), Muhammad was taken by the angel Gabriel to Paradise where he saw many angels in grotesque shapes. One of these was of such great size that it touched the sky with its head and the depths of the sea with its feet. The body was that of a rooster and the head was like a young woman's. God had commanded that this beast should periodically summon the roosters on earth, who in turn would arouse other earthly beasts to praise God.

Happel's extension of Muhammad's *Mi'raj* is only partially correct. It does not appear in the Koran. Furthermore, traditional sources hold that the angel was a white cock and none of the four elaborations of this legend in the *Hayāt al-Hayawān* of al-Damīrī mentions a human head.

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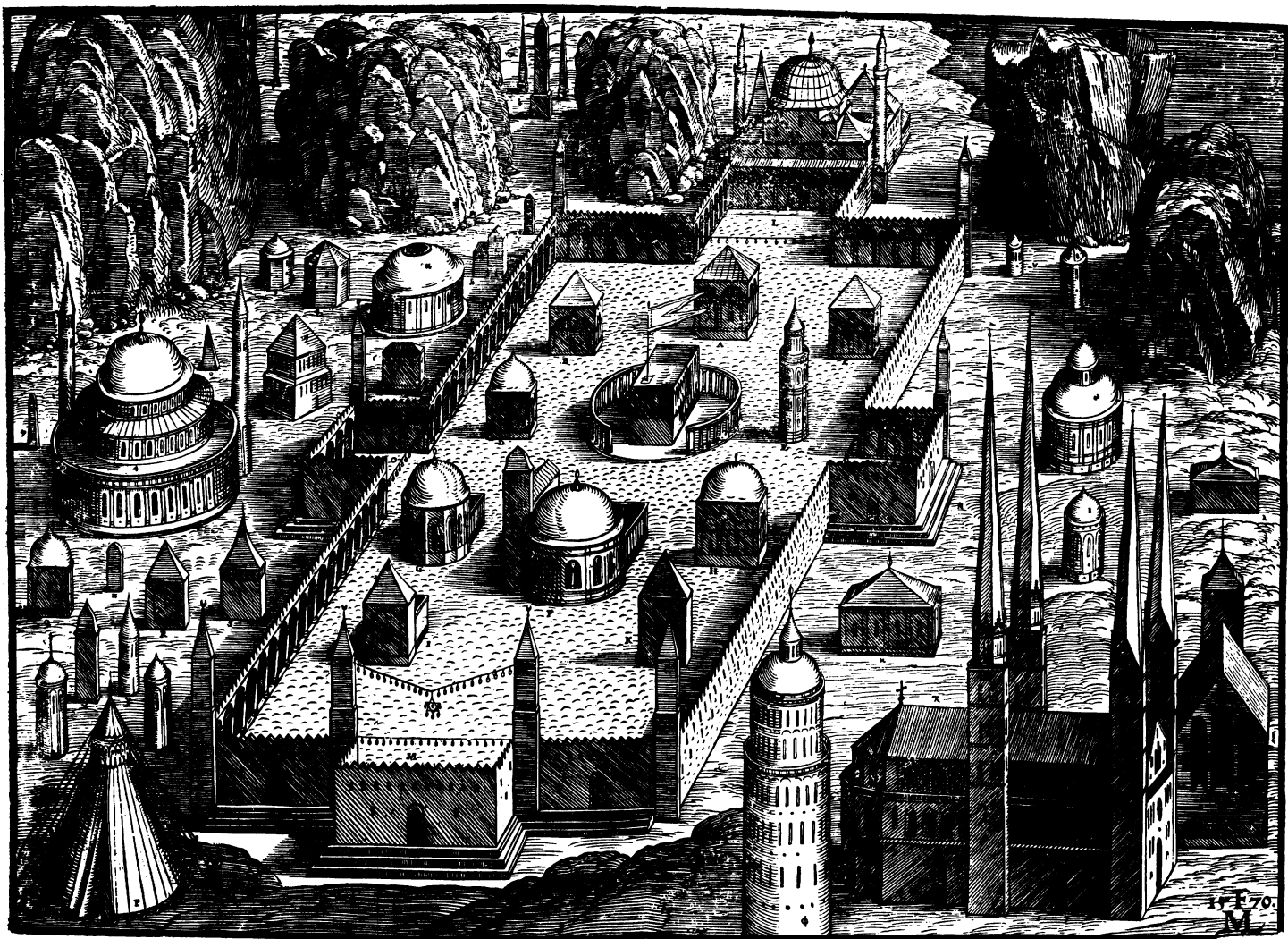
Lorichs digressed from his steady output of useful sketches to render this peculiar bird's-eye view of a walled mosque surrounded by sanctuaries and mausoleums. It appears to be a conglomerate representation of Mecca and Medina, but Lorichs's source is a mystery, particularly since such a subject is unknown in Islamic art. Happel inadvertently claimed that this picture was inspired by paintings of this theme that were found in mosques, and he says such paintings were the only exception to the Muslim tradition expressed in the Hadith forbidding representational art.

The reference marks indicate that Lorichs had planned to describe the major buildings. As no manuscript by his hand now remains, however, we do not know if the descriptions given by Happel were the product of his own knowledge or if he had seen a manuscript by Lorichs. Happel realized that he was discussing a hypothetical city, and he tells us that the Turks called this idealized walled area "Meham" because it looked like Mecca.

Happel said that the rectangular structure, covered by systematically draped cloths and surrounded by a colonnade, was the tomb of "the false prophet Muhammad as it is seen in Mecca." Happel knew, however, that Muhammad was buried in Medina, for he identified the building labeled G as the "church" in Medina where Muhammad died. At the time of Lorichs's sketch (after 1555), the tomb, whose wooden dome had been rebuilt, covered with lead, and painted green in 1266, would not have appeared at all like the building identified by Happel as the tomb. Rather, this rectangular building bears a resemblance to the *Kaaba* in Mecca, which was also draped and encircled by an arcade.

Happel identified other buildings as the memorials or tombs of various figures not only of the Muslim hierarchy and the Old Testament but also of such pillars of the Christian church as John the Baptist and the disciple John! The tent pitched in the left foreground is that of Abraham, and the surrounding hills are identified as the spots where Christ prayed on the Mount of Olives and from which he ascended into Heaven. The Gothic church with four spires symbolizes the Church of Rome.

According to Happel, the Turks believed that the large white tower in the middle foreground was the site to which Christ would return to reign for forty years before the end of the world. Information that might elucidate this notion is scarce. The Koran states only that Christ will appear at the Judgment as a reminder of the final hour. Christ's second coming was briefly mentioned by Imam al-Bukhārī, a ninth-century traditionalist. A thirteenth-century commentator on the Koran, al-Baidāwī, says that Christ will preside for forty years over an entirely Islamic community, and at the end of this period he will die for the first time (a concept convenient to the Muslim denial of Christ's immortality). The Muslims will bury him at Medina at the feet of Muhammad in the vacant spot reserved for him. While the details of these Muslim accounts of this idea differ, it is clear that Happel's story is not without precedent. One might surmise that Happel emphasized the Muslim belief in this event in an effort to appease Christian disdain toward the Turks, whose hostile aggression Christians had experienced for several centuries.



Accessions from the Florance Waterbury Collection



This museum is constantly being enriched through the enthusiasm and generosity of individual collectors. Florance Waterbury was one of these. The birds and animals of Chinese art fascinated her, and she tried to unravel some of their mysterious meanings in her book *Early Chinese Symbols and Literature: Vestiges and Speculations*. At her death a year ago Miss Waterbury left her collection and a handsome bequest of money to the Museum. During her lifetime she gave us several outstanding early pieces, notably a bronze sword blade decorated with animals inlaid in gold and silver, and a painted pottery incense burner, or hill censer, in unusually fine condition – both of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). Shown here are two rhinoceroses, tomb pieces also from the Han dynasty, in front of a yellow satin panel brocaded with dragons and *feng-huang* among flowers and clouds, made in the early eighteenth century.

We are glad to show, in the recent accessions area of the Far East galleries, from May 21 to September 15, a selection of the many works of art that have come to the Museum from Miss Waterbury's collection.

FONG CHOW

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