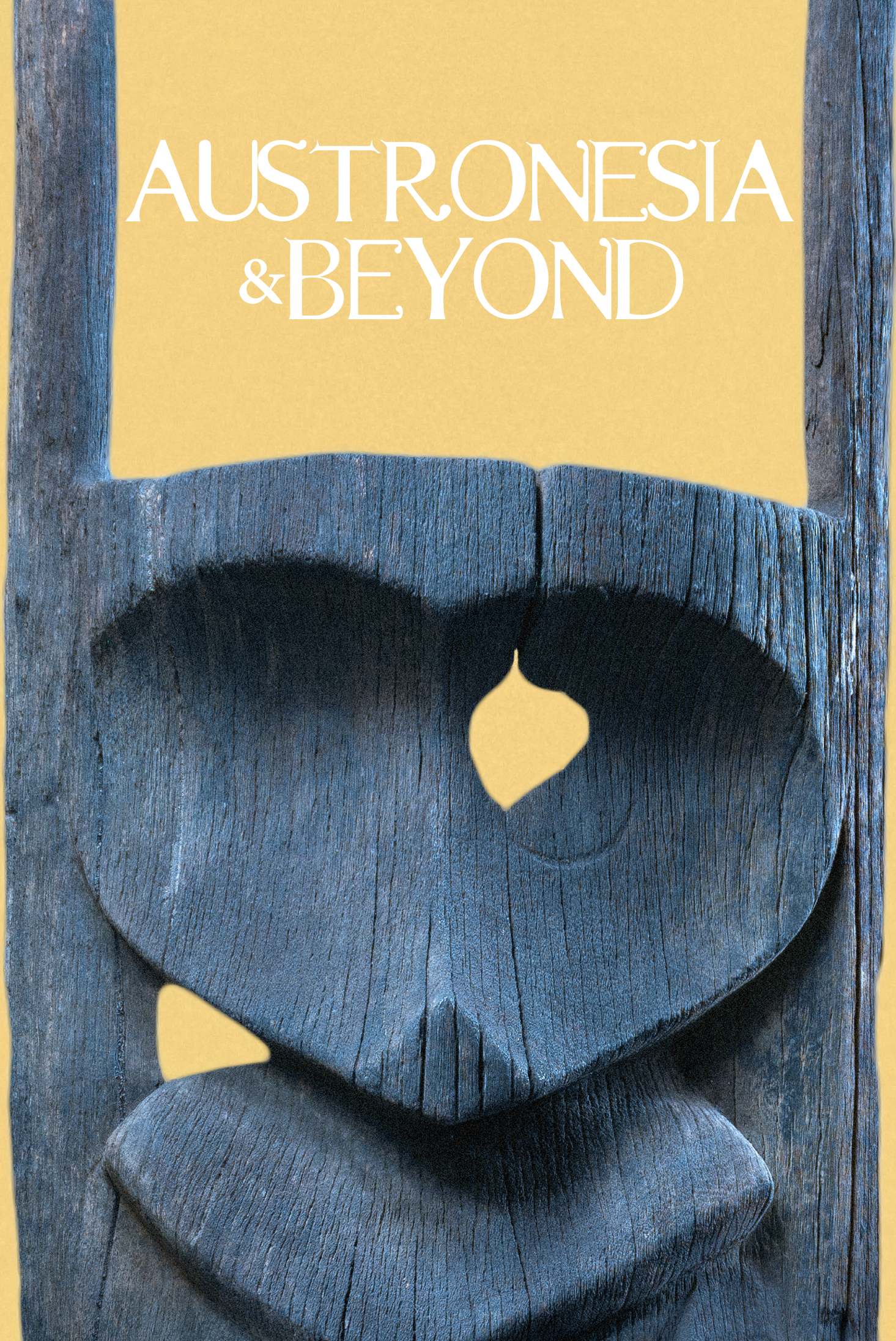


AUSTRONESIA & BEYOND



A U S T R O N E S I A

&

B E Y O N D

By

MARTIN DOUSTAR

The invention of the term Austronesian (*Austronesisch*) - attributed to Austro-German anthropologist Wilhelm Schmidt - dates back to the turn of the 20th century only. Yet, the origins of the word are to be found in the cradle of Western civilisation: from a combination of the latin *auster* (wind from the south) and the greek *nēsos* (island).

Following our exhibition held last year during the **Parcours des Mondes 2022** and the relevant publication *Austronesia: In Pursuit of the Origins* we continue our journey along the expansion of the Ausronesians southward with a selection of artworks reflecting the scope of their influence across the Indo-Pacific region, from Mainland Southeast Asia through their extension into the South Pacific islands.





CATALOGUE

FUNERARY VESSEL

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand
300 BC - 200 AD

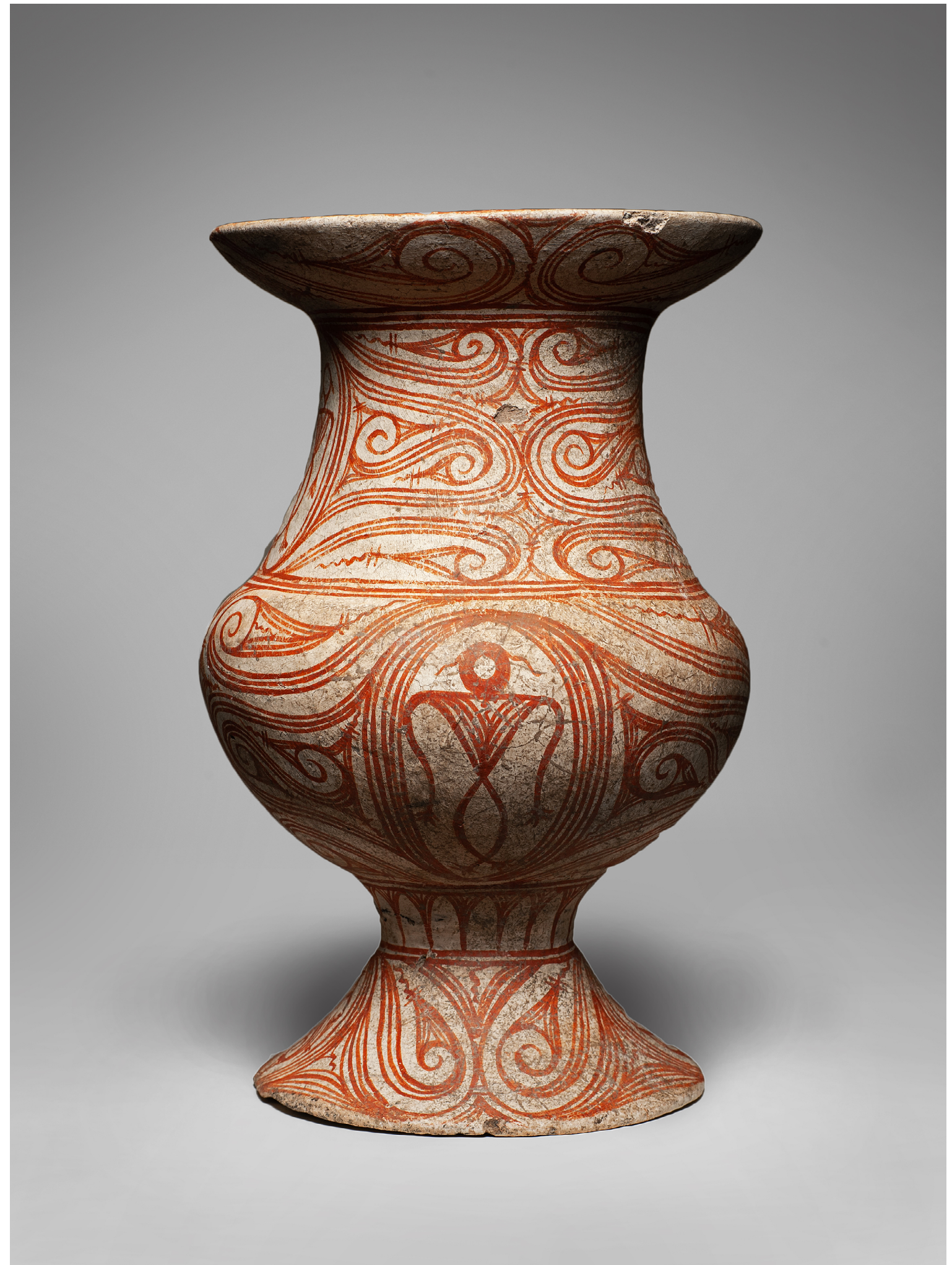
Clay, natural pigment, 30 cm

Ex. Private collection, Arlington, Texas, circa 1960s.

Ban Chiang is an archaeological site discovered in 1966 on the Khorat plateau of Udon Thani province in northeast Thailand. The region was occupied from about 3600 BC to 200 AD. Excavations starting from the late 1960s, contributed in large quantities of potteries in a variety of styles, along with numerous bronze and glass ornaments, including armbands, anklets, rings, and necklaces. But the site is especially renowned for its typical earthenware with buff slip painted of swirling motifs in red oxide pigment.

The present vessel resting on a flared foot with a patterned surface painted in a cream slip and red-orange scrolling motifs is particularly exceptional due to the presence of abstract human figures around the body. This type of decor remains extremely rare. To our knowledge only a handful of other examples are known - less elaborate vessels with similar figures were notably in the vast collections of Dr Kurt Sandmair in Cologne.

Earthenware vessels such as this played an important role in funerary burials - the deceased was generally buried in reclining position with potteries probably filled with substances for the afterlife placed at the head and feet.





JADE CONG

Liangzhu culture, Neolithic Period, 3000 BC or Later
Lower Yangzi River Valley, China

Marble, 20 cm high

Ex. Dania Beach collection, Florida

A *cong* is a straight tube with a circular bore and square outer section with more or less convex sides. The outer surface is divided vertically or horizontally such that the whole defines a hollow cylinder embedded in a partial rectangular block. Proportions vary: a *cong* may be squat or taller than it is wide. The outer faces, like the present example, are sometimes decorated with mask-like faces associated to Austronesian imagery, and which may be related to the taotie designs found on later bronze vessels.

Although it is generally considered to be a ritual object of some sort, the original function and meaning of the *cong* are unknown. Later writings speak of the *cong* as symbolizing the earth, while the *bi* represents the heavens. The square represents the earth and a circle represents the heavens.

The earliest *cong* were produced by the Liangzhu culture (3400-2250 BC); later examples date mainly from the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Interest in the jade shape developed again during the 12th-13th century Song dynasty and continued to be used in ceramic and metalwork for centuries.



3

EXCEPTIONAL HILT

Shang Period, Anyang, China
Circa 1500 BC

Bone, 13 cm

Ex. Collection François Antonovich, Paris

A PAIR OF TAOTIE ORNAMENTS

Zhou Dynasty, China
1028-256 BC

Bronze, 7 cm high

Ex. Collection Prosper de Chasseloup-Laubat (1805-1875)

Prosper de Chasseloup-Laubat, eminent State Councilor, Minister of the Navy and Colonies under Napoleon III, began to collect art and archaeological objects, which he discovered while managing Cochinchine, giving his name to the French school in Saigon, and signed the first commercial and military agreements with Japan. His son Louis, engineer and specialist in ship design, enriched it over the decades and during his travels in Asia, particularly in Japan. François, grandson, inherited the passions of his ancestors, he traveled through Asia, becoming a recognized explorer. He was the first to penetrate to the center of English Malaysia, and to bring back unpublished documents on the still unknown tribes of the Sakai. He spent several years in Indochine, China, comparing his archaeological discoveries with those of his friend, Father Theillard de Chardin and also traveled to Korea, Japan... The collection was also completed by his sister Magdeleine and her husband Achille, Prince Murat, during their world tour in America and then in Asia in 1926/1927.





5

« TLV - TYPE » MIRROR

Han Period, China
200 BC-200 AD

Bronze, 13 cm

With Galerie Gérard Lévy (1966-2016)
Artcurial, Paris, 29 April 2021, lot 58

6

« TWELVE FROGS » BRACELET

Dong Son culture, Northern Vietnam
Circa 100 BC

Bronze, 10 cm

A similar bracelet is in the collection of the Barbier-Mueller Museum, Geneva (Inv. 2505-44).



CEREMONIAL DAGGER

Java, Indonesia
300 BC - 200 AD

Bronze, iron, 31 cm

Ex. Collection of the late Dr Kurt Sandmair, Munich (since the 1980s)

This rare dagger displays an exceptional janus decoration on its handle, with the distinctive heart-shaped grimacing face with bulging eyes known as «Pejeng-style» - in reference to the famous Moon of Pejeng, the largest bronze drum in the world, discovered in the village of Pejeng in Bali. This iconic face is probably the most memorable creation of Austronesian imagery, it can be traced back from Mainland Southeast Asia, 2000 years BC, until the late 19th century, in Island Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. The most striking parallel are certainly the baby-carriers from the island of Borneo, carved in relief with the very same motif. See B. De Grunne «Dayak 2», 2015, appendix.

To our knowledge this ceremonial dagger is quite unique in the vast corpus of bronze artefacts found in the Indo-Pacific region, it is both an important testimony of the Austronesian heritage in Island Southeast Asia, and a refined example from the pinnacle period of metalworking in Indonesia.



GUARDIAN FIGURE

Chu Kingdom, Hubei Province, China
Circa 500-200 BC

Wood, natural pigments, 53 cm

Provenance : Ex. Collection Malmezat, France.
Acquired in Hong Kong, ca. 1980s.

Following page >

SEATED FIGURE

Batak People, Sumatra, Indonesia
1800-1900 AD

Brass, 19,6 cm

In «*Les Bataks: Un peuple de l'île de Sumatra*» Achim Sibeth describes a particular group of brass and bronze objects depicting standing or squatting figures, approximately 10-15 cm in average, with arms joined at the knees or elevated in a dancing posture. Any individual accused of robbery, of cattle or someone else's property, should take an oath while holding one of these figures called *gana sigadap* in his hands. (Sibeth: 177)





GUARDIAN FIGURE

Modang people, Wahau River, East Kalimantan, Indonesia
19th century or before

Ironwood, 202 cm

Collected *in situ* by Dr. Z. in the late 1990s.
Private collection, France

This imposing sculpture of tremendous presence can be related to a group of Modang figures collected by Edmund Grundner on the banks of the Telen River after a massive flood. These tall post figures were laying in the mud for at least 300 years when they were recovered. The most important sculpture of this group was acquired by the Quai Branly, Paris, (Inv. n° 70.2008.72.1) and the rest of the collection dispersed among various collectors around the world.

Unlike the Grundner' group of sculptures, the present figure was not collected on the Telen River but on the neighbouring Wahau River, further east. Its style differs slightly, less archaic, but more sophisticated and detailed. However, it presents a very comparable construction. Like the other sculptures of the corpus we can observe multiple intertwined creatures and limbs, both anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and vegetal. Furthermore, the function of the sculpture as a supportive burial post appears to be similar.

In his study «The Kayanic Tradition Vol.I» Mark Johnson (2020) published another group of seven Modang post figures with very close resemblance to our sculpture. Large heart-shaped or triangular face (probably inspired from a human skull) dominating the viewer, often twined with a smaller reversed head at the bottom; sort of tall «ears» like antennae (often broken) above the top head to support and stabilize the coffin of the deceased, and a long post end destined to be planted in the ground.

Anthropologist Antonio Guerreiro explains that these burial posts represent a psychopomp spirit linked to thunder and lightning; their responsibility is to escort newly deceased souls of chiefs and nobles to the afterlife. Varans are associated with this spirit as a symbol of the deceased.

Mark A. Johnson «The Kayanic Tradition, Volume I: Guardian Sculptures», 2020, p. 156-167





BARAVA

Solomon Islands, circa 1500 - 1800 AD

Shell (*Tridacna Gigas*)

26 cm wide (11), 24 cm high (12)

Ex. Collection Baudouin de Grunne, Wezembeek-Oppem, Belgium (11)

Ex. Collection Lancrenon, France (12)

Objects fashioned from the hard marble-like shell of the giant clam are prized by many Melanesian peoples, but the art of working giant-clam shell reached its apogee in the Solomon Islands. The most complex clam shell objects were *barava*, ornate openwork plaques created in the western Solomon Islands. The designs on some *barava* are geometric, but some of them include stylized human figures interspersed with forms that resemble faces, shown with spiral eyes and grinning mouths filled with minute teeth. The large example illustrated on the previous page is strongly reminiscent of the archaic face found commonly in the Austronesian world since prehistoric times. While the above *barava* has the typical large ring shape associated with traditional currency but it is surmounted by a single, fantomatic, standing figure. To our knowledge the iconography of this very ancient *barava* is unique.

Barava appear to have been associated with burial places and were reportedly used to adorn structures housing the skulls of prominent men or slain enemies, or placed on graves. In the past, some *barava* formed part of *vovoso*, powerful charms carried in war canoes during headhunting expeditions to protect the crew and ensure success.



Two tridacna objects on the desk of notorious collector Baudouin de Grunne, Wezembeek-Oppem, circa 1990.



CANOE PROW

New Georgia, Solomon Islands
1700 - 1900 AD

Wood, shell, 17 cm

Estate of the Gurney family, Loudwater, United Kingdom (acquired in the late 19th century)
With Michael Graham-Stewart, Auckland

An extremely ancient and archaic *Nguzunguzu* (war canoe prow). A very close example with similar realistic human features and shell inlays can be found in the collection of the Te Papa Museum, Auckland (FE000322).



LARGE PECTORAL, *TEMA*

Santa Cruz, Solomon Islands Archipelago
1800 - 1900 AD

Shell (*tridacna gigas*), turtle shell, fiber
Diam. 15,4 cm

Ex. Collection Alain de Monbrison, Paris
Acquired from Galerie Monbrison, Paris



ANCESTOR SKULL

Asmat People, Irian Jaya, Indonesia
1800 - 1900 AD

Human skull, rattan, feathers, fiber, resin, seeds, 19 cm

Ex. Collection Paul Harris, Anchorage
With Kirby Lewis, Seattle

A very ancient Asmat skull with deep smoky patina achieved after decades of handling, from one generation to another. Sharp bone structure with prognathic jaw, and original head-dress almost intact. It hardly get any better.



ANCESTOR MASK

Porapora River, Papua New Guinea
1800 - 1900 AD

Clay, 17 cm

Ex. Collection John A. Friede, Rye

Published in B. Frank, «Porapora, Archaic Terracottas from the Jolika Collection of Marcia and John Friede», 2015, n°16.

In his catalogue introduction about the collection of (mostly) miniature clay heads from the Jolika collection, Bruce Frank writes that the majority of these pieces were found at the site of an abandoned ceremonial house in a village near the Porapora River, a southern tributary of the Sepik River. Although, other findings in the region suggests that they were produced in several other villages dedicated to ceramic production, south of the Sepik River.

The present example, probably an ornament for a large jar, is one of the largest and finest clay mask to have survived, and the highlight of the Jolika collection of archaic terracottas.





ANCESTOR FIGURE

Ramu River, Papua-New-Guinea
1800-1900 AD or before

Wood, traces of pigment, 50 cm

With Alex Philips, Melbourne
With Kevin Conru, Brussels

An Important
Kandimboang Statue



ANCESTOR FIGURE

Murik People, Lower Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
1800 - 1900 AD

Wood, pigment, fabric, 62 cm

Ex. Private collection, Switzerland

Kandimboang literally means “carved human figure” in Murik language, and they represent spirits and humans, both male and female. They vary greatly in size from under 6 inches in height to standing figures 5-6’ tall or more. The larger ones are generally used to invoke spiritual power from specific male and female spirits, mythic figures and ancestors in curing rituals in the men’s house, and at initiations. Designs on the shoulders, back and stomach may indicate descent group affiliation and specific identity. *Jari* for example is an important female mythic figure in the region who came to the Murik Lakes from the West bearing outrigger canoe technology and gave knowledge of how to give birth to women. These objects are kept in the women’s and men’s houses – the former being a larger than usual dwelling house – and deployed on certain occasions to call forth the spiritual presence and influence of the entities whom they represent.

Because *kandimboang* require skill and conscious intention, and even spiritual inspiration to create, they are treated with respect and care. Figures with a long, hooked nose are spirit figures, while those with more human noses are meant to represent actual humans, or spirits in their human form. Nevertheless, apart from their deployment under certain circumstances (offerings made, words spoken to call forth presence and empowerment) the wooden figures are neutral material objects much of the time.

On the other hand, to avoid unintentionally or negatively bringing forth their power, custodians of named figures keep them in special bags or bark containers in secluded places (such as the rafters or the back of the house). Their beneficent influence is dependent on treating them with respect, which includes refurbishing their ornamentation for proper display, and offering them food, tobacco and betel nut.

The figures are brought out on occasions when their support, as representatives of ancestral and contemporary spiritual presence, is important to the success of an undertaking.

Cf. Kathleen Barlow, “Making persons in Sepik society: Suun and Kandimboang in Murik ritual and trade”, in *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, n°146, 2018, p. 15-24.





OVERMODELED SKULL

Iatmul, Middle Sepik, Papua-New-Guinea
1800-1900 AD

Human skull, hair, clay, vegetal oil, pigments, cauris, seeds, 19 cm

Collected from the ceremonial house of Yentchenmengua, before 1914
Loed Van Bussel, Amsterdam
Acher Eskenasy, Paris

Published in "*Der Kaizerin-Augusta-Fluss, Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition 1908-1910*",
Band 1, vol. II, Otto Reche, Hamburg 1913. Taf. XXXVIII, 2 (n° 8 from left)
«La Mort n'en saura rien, Reliques d'Europe et d'Océanie», Yves Le Fur (collectif)
Musée national des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, 2000, Paris, p. 61, 239.
«Golgotha», Martin Doustar, 2014, p.75, cat. n°12.

Exhibited in «*La Mort n'en saura rien, Reliques d'Europe et d'Océanie*», Musée national
des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Paris, 12 oct. 1999-24 jan. 2000

Photographed *in situ* by Friedrich Fülleborn during the 1908-1910 Hamburger Südsee-Expedition, this magnificent overmodeled head originally topped a monumental skull rack displayed in the ceremonial house of Yentchenmengua, at km 375 along the Sepik River.

In the compiled diary "Der Kaizerin-Augusta-Fluss", Franz Emil Hellwig who was part of the expedition notes that at km 375 they arrived in a large and densely populated village where they were attacked from both sides of the channel (Reche, 1913 : 40). He is not sure about the name of the village, but they were able to photograph the majestic skull rack which was dominating the ceremonial house... We know from a photograph published later (Behrmann, 1922 : 181) this was indeed the village of Yentchenmengua.

The present head appears on this historically important 1909 photograph by Fülleborn, see following page, the sixth from the left on the skull rack.



OVERMODELED SKULL

Malekula Island, Vanuatu Archipelago
1800 - 1900 AD

Human skull, vegetal paste, tree fern, natural pigment, 25 cm

Ex. Private collection, Paris

This haunting ancestor skull belongs to a corpus of very ancient and rare 19th century Vanuatu heads which shows the same black crusty surface, an extensive cranial deformation, and a very dramatic expression with prominent features. The unusual black patina of these heads results from the use of a specific pigment but it also attests of their long presence inside the men's ceremonial house.

A very comparable head was published and sold by the gallery Voyageurs & Curieux in Paris; another one belongs to a canadian museum in Ontario, and a third example was acquired by us in a pre-war collection in Czech Republic and sold to a private collector.



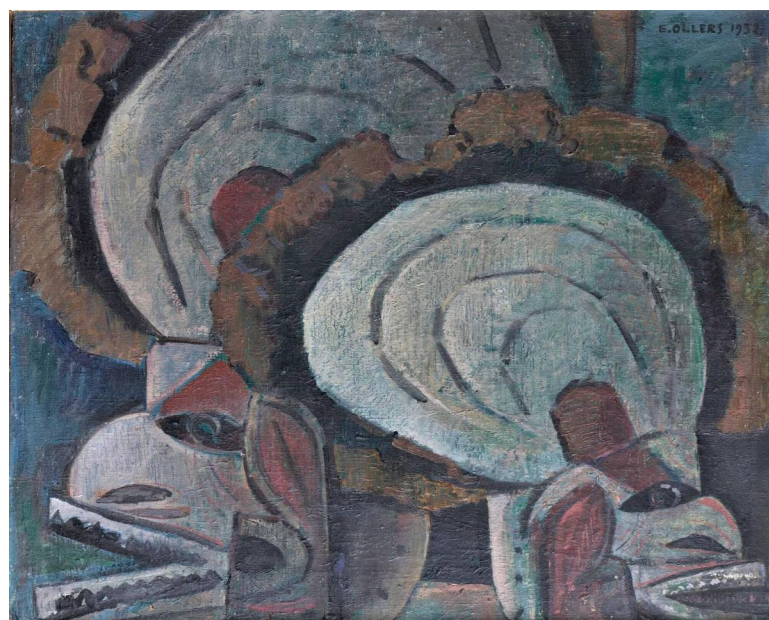
TATANUA MASK

New Ireland, Melanesia
1800-1900 AD

Wood, Turbo Operculum, natural fiber and pigments

Ex. Collection Dr. Jan Olof Ollers, Stockholm
Sotheby's, 26 Mars 1973, Collection Ollers, Godwin & Ridler, lot 61
With Gil Lipton, London
Collection Frieda (1921-2008) et Milton (1914-2005) Rosenthal, Harrison
Sotheby's, New York, 14 novembre 2008, lot 92

This mask was probably part of the collection of Dr Jan Olof Ollers' father, the Swedish painter Edvin Ollers (1888-1959), who was himself an avid collector of Oceanic art and owned several tatanua masks. It could well have inspired his own painting illustrated below (personal communication with Michael Hamson).





CURRENCY PENDANT

New Ireland, Melanesia
1800-1900 AD

Shell, Turbo Operculum, beads, natural fiber

Ex. Collection Vanderstraete, Lasne, Belgium

This exquisite piece of jewelry is a very scarce type of currency pendant from New Ireland that was reserved exclusively to a clan leader. A comparable example with a missing cord is published in K. Conru "Art de l'Archipel Bismarck" (2013), p. 242. The present example is complete, totally surrealistic, and comes from the legendary Vanderstraete collection.

HEI TIKI

Maori People, New Zealand
1500 - 1800 AD

Nephrite, red sealing wax, 12 cm

Ex. Private collection, United Kingdom (1911-2016)
By inheritance to previous owners.

Considering the hard nature of the stone, the extensive signs of wear visible on the *Hei Tiki* pendant above indicate a remarkable longevity of active possession. *Pounamu taonga* (green stone treasure) increase in *mana* (spiritual power or prestige) as they pass from one generation to another. *Pounamu* is believed to absorb the *mana* of its past owners, and some heirloom pieces are named after a former owner in memory of their position and authority. The most prized taonga are those with known histories going back many generations: these are believed to have their own *mana* and were often given as gifts to seal important agreements.



POUNAMU PENDANTS

Maori People, New Zealand
1500 - 1900 AD

Green stone, from 3 cm to 17 cm

From various private collections, United Kingdom and France.

Jade was discovered by the austronesian peoples of Taiwan and mined soon after, in 2000 BCE. During this time, migrations by Austronesians from Taiwan began southward towards the Philippines, reaching the South Pacific Islands and New Zealand almost 3000 years later. The carving of jade both as utilitarian and ornamental appears to be common to almost all Austronesian peoples.

The Maori word *Pounamu* refers to two main type of green stone valued for carving: nephrite jade and translucent bowenite, a type of serpentine. *Pounamu* plays a very important role in Māori culture and is a *taonga* (treasure). Among the numerous *Pounamu* ornaments identified in Maori culture we find two types of earrings: the *kuru*, which is a straight or oval earring, and the *Kapeu*, similar to the *kuru* but with curved ends, also used as teething aids.





CALABASH, TAHA

Maori People, New Zealand
1700 - 1800 AD

Gourd plant, 36 cm

Ex. Collection Kenneth Athol Webster, London
Wayne Heathcote, London
William Ziff collection, New York

Published in Kevin Conru (collectif), «Polynesian Art», 2023.

Taha huahua were fashioned from dried hollowed gourds (*Lagenaria Siceraria*) called *Hue* in Maori language, and used to hold preserved foods. They were highly prized, decorated and used as presentation vessels at important feasts or for important guests. Engraved over its entire surface with an extensive network of curvilinear decorations, this magnificent cup with a warm patina is an absolute rarity.

The ornamentation patterns are reminiscent of the tattoos or *moko* reported on the famous portrait made by Sidney Parkinson in 1769 of the son of the Maori chief Otegoow-goow. This exceptional object is similar to that of the James Hooper collection, kept at the British Museum, see above page. The extreme fragility of the material in which it is carved makes it particularly rare in museums. Its perfect state of integrity is remarkable. According to the inventory drawn up by David Simmons (Catalogue of Maori Artefacts in the Museums of Canada and the United States of America, Auckland Institute and Museum, 1982, p. 124 and pl. 110 b) North American public collections retain only a single specimen of this type of object, Chicago, Field Museum, 273904, Fuller collection (already reproduced in Force and Force, The Fuller Collection of Pacific Artifacts, Praeger, New York, 1971, p. 28). According to its databases, the Musée du Quai Branly does not have any. The Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne holds a comparable object, but of less elegant form (Inv.-Nr. 11742, published by Hilke Thode-Arora, Tapa und Tiki. Die Polynesian- Sammlung des Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museums, Ethnologica N. F. Band 23, Köln, 2001, No. 27 p. 40). For a gourd decorated with similar designs, see the painting by Gottfried Lindauer, Wanganui Museum, reproduced in Barrow, Maori Art of New Zealand, Reed, Wellington, 1978, p. 78.



Various gourd recipients from the Dominion Museum in Wellington, now renamed Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.



Below: Gourd vessel from the James Hooper collection, collected by William Colenso between 1834 and 1899, now in the British Museum (Inv. BM: 1977.Oc.8.5). Published in S. Phelps (1975), Plate 8, number 36.





HEI TIKI

Maori People, New Zealand
1500 - 1800 AD

Nephrite, 11,5 cm

Collected in New Zealand by Dr. Alfred Burnford between 1913 and 1934.
By inheritance to Mrs Helen Muir, United Kingdom.

Born Aaron Bernstein in 1884, Manchester, 'Alfred' became a TB specialist after his medical training and experience in several Manchester and London hospitals. In 1913 he took a job in New Zealand, for the government, at Te Waikato Tuberculosis Hospital/Sanatorium near Cambridge, North Island.

In 1914 Alfred was gazetted Captain in the New Zealand Army Medical Corp and served on the Western Front. He returned to New Zealand in June 1919 and took up medical practice in Morrinsville, running a nursing home which served the communities, farms and the Maori Pa. We believe this is where he was given the Tiki, as a token of gratitude, for his care. When the family planned to return to England in 1934, it was thought sensible to change their name to 'Burnford', to avoid prejudice. My grandfather was very upset about this – he became Alfred Burnford and worked as a GP in Sussex and then retired to Somerset.

Personal communication with Mrs. Helen Muir, 2022



Alfred Bernstein Burnford – third from left with child

W A H A I K A

Maori People, New Zealand
Circa 1800 AD

Whalebone, 34 cm

Ex. Collection Louise Parsons, Florida
Probably acquired at Sotheby's Parke Bernet, New York

The *wahaika* is a type of traditional Maori hand weapon. There are short club-like weapons usually made of wood or whalebone and are used for thrusting and striking in close-quarter, hand-to-hand fighting. Whalebone *wahaika* are called *wahaika paraoa*.

Wahaika translates to "mouth of the fish", in reference to the notch on one side which is used to catch an opponent's weapon. On the other side just above the handle the concave tip above a carved humanoid figure is the primary striking edge, particularly used against the opponent's temples, face, and ribs. The rest of the spherical edge is sharp like a blade.



WAR CLUB, U'U

Marquesas Islands, Polynesia
1700-1800

Ironwood (*Casuarina Equisetifolia*), 147 cm

The estate of Leonard M. Stuttman (1925-2012)
By inheritance to Jeffrey Stuttman, Holland, Michigan.

This refined and very ancient war club belonged to Leonard Stuttman from Chicago, member of the Explorers Club and owner of a film adventure production company, he traveled around the world during the 1950s-1960s, from Africa to the South Seas, acquiring artefacts along his voyages. Stuttman's world adventures, filming and communication background led to his television show, "The Many Worlds of Len Stuttman" aired in Lansing and Chicago for several years. After his passing his collection went to his son Jeffrey Stuttman.





TOGGLE, *IVI PO'O*

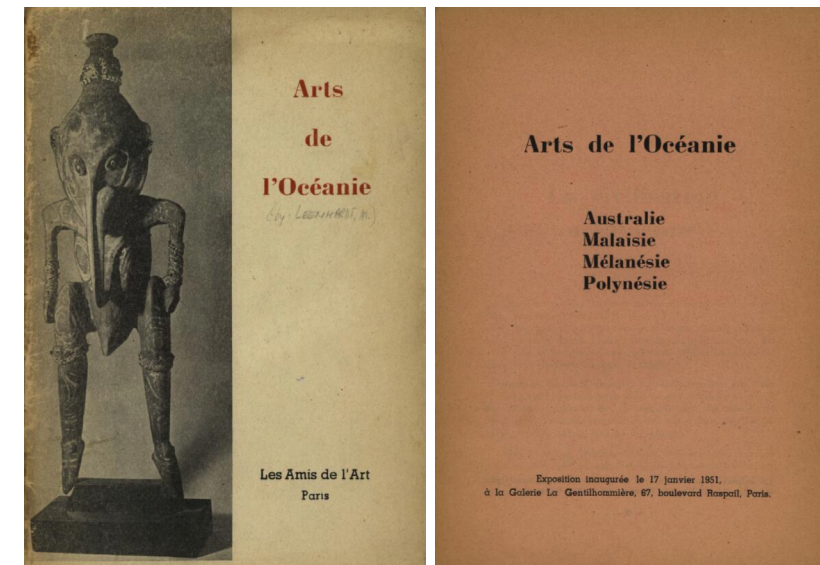
Marquesas Islands, Polynesia
1700-1900 AD

Bone, 4 cm

Provenance : Ex. Collection Pierre & Claude Verité, Paris

Exhibited in «*Arts de l'Océanie*», Galerie La Gentilhommeière, Paris
January 1951. Cat. page 16, n°116 (non ill.).

An ancient and very refined human bone toggle that was used or converted as a pipe.





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