Scowen and Company, ca. 1870-1880. Photograph of Kandian chiefs, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) collected during a Harvard botanical expedition in the 1880s.

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From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery

MELISSA BANTA and CURTIS M. HINSLEY

Melissa Banta is Director of Photographic Archives at the Peabody Museum. Born in Buffalo, New York, she earned her undergraduate degree in Anthropology at SUNY Buffalo (1976) and the M.S. in Science Communication at Boston Univ. School of Public Communication (1982). Ms. Banta has curated a number of photographic exhibitions at Harvard and is co-curator, with Curtis M. Hinsley of From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery. She and Prof. Hinsley co-authored, with the assistance of Joan Kathryn O'Donnell, the exhibition catalogue from which the following article is excerpted.

Curtis M. Hinsley is Assoc. Prof. of History at Colgate Univ. A native of Tennessee, he was educated at Princeton (B.A. 1967) and the Univ. of Wisconsin (M.A. 1971, Ph.D. 1976). He was at Harvard from 1979-1981, first as Visiting Scholar at the Peabody Museum, then as Visiting Professor. The author of Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910, he is writing a history of the Peabody Museum and of anthropology in Boston from 1860-1930.

"No one would believe it who had not seen it," wrote Christopher Columbus in reference to the generosity and innocence of the native peoples he encountered on his first voyage to the New World (Major 1870:7). Travel and discovery, Columbus soon realized, end finally at home with the effort to transform personal experience into shared public knowledge. This communication problem is at the heart of the anthropological endeavor. The fifth-century B.C. Greek historian and ethnographer Herodotus considered it his first duty "to interpret his picture of humankind; to illustrate parallel cases; to extract by comparison the genuine observation from the blundered folk-tale commentary" (Myres 1908:122). In the same spirit, anthropologists today gather and interpret data, taking advantage of their ever-increasing ability to communicate by means of visual imagery.

The Peabody Museum's new exhibition From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery, which opened Sept. 4th as part of Harvard's 350th anniversary celebration, investigates the ways in which anthropologists have used the camera as a recording, analytic, and aesthetic medium and what this body of photographic work reflects about the changing perceptions of these researchers about their subjects. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue illustrate the role of photographic imagery in anthropology from the discipline's formative years to the present, with documentation selected from the Photographic Archives of Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and from the work of past and present members of the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University. The Photographic Archives includes research undertaken by the museum since its founding in 1866 and work done by other anthropologists, photographers, and institutions. Housing over half a million images, the archives constitute a remarkable corpus of anthropological photography (Banta 1982). Photographs have been selected to examine the potentials and limitations of using the camera as a fact-gathering and interpretive tool and to explore the broader implications of the uses and misuses of visual imagery within the human sciences.

Like all scientists, anthropologists seek to gather reliable data based on their observations. They employ a variety of means to observe, record, and collect cultural information, preserving the meaning of its original context to increase its interpretative value once removed from the field. Photography, one of the tools anthropologists use, has involved an ongoing interaction between the nature of the technology and the ambitions of its users.

Photography can, by immobilizing the elements of time and space, in every sense enhance the anthropologist's task in both the field and laboratory. The fact that the anthropologist's subject of scrutiny is human beings creates unsettling dilemmas. It is admittedly more difficult to be objective about people than about any other subject of scientific investigation, even when the contract is indirect, as in examining archaeological artifacts or human remains. Where the study of other living peoples is concerned, the subjects have historically been afforded limited opportunity for interpreting, exchanging ideas about, or controlling the uses of cultural information gathered by the anthropologist.

Photography compounds the problems of control and interpretation of information. Anthropologists have used the photographic image for research data, for presentation to the professional community, and for public consumption. These distinctions of use are often unclear, however, and images taken for one purpose may ultimately serve another. The objectivity of the anthropological photograph is further compromised by the fact that photographic technology remains bound to the constraints of human intervention. Armed with the camera, anthropologists can probe, scan, magnify, reduce, isolate, contrast,
Photographer: J.T. Zealy, 1850. Daguerreotypes of Renty, an African born slave, and Delia, his daughter, commissioned by Louis Agassiz, one of the first scholars to use photographic "evidence" to corroborate "scientific" theory. Although his misguided and ignoble theory was discredited by the mid-1860s, the daguerreotypes survive as important documents in both the history of photography and the "scientific" study of race.

debase, or idealize their subjects. Through photography, they can create, disseminate, and forever seal in time their own interpretations of humankind. As an extension of its operator's perceptions, the medium possesses unique properties, making it in many respects more subject to the limitations of human observation than other scientific research tools.

Yet the variables between viewer and subject also create endless opportunities for anthropological research. Photography can render the exotic familiar, enhance the commonplace, capture movement in time, reveal unseen features, and present remote perspectives. Photographs can illustrate subjects in their original setting, providing important information for fuller understanding. Alternatively, the camera can isolate subjects from their surroundings, affording new interpretations. The image freezes a slice of time that, unlike life itself, the scientist may analyze again and again. What the camera has recorded may in some instances be all that remains of peoples, places, and their histories.

The photograph remains an ever-changing mirror, reflecting different realities at each viewing. As our understanding of history and peoples changes, the photographic image offers new insights into documented subjects and the attitudes of those behind the camera. With the passage of time, we find meanings that transcend the intentions with which an image was originally created. Nearly one hundred fifty years after its invention, we are just beginning to realize the generative and sustaining nature of the photograph.

Three examples from the exhibition From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and The Power of Imagery demonstrate the range of uses to which photography has been put by anthropologists and some of the questions it has raised.

Problems of Power and Consent: Racial and Ethnic Typologies

Nineteenth-century biological anthropology, the study of people as biological organisms, was concerned primarily with body measurements and classification of human racial types. Direct observation of skulls, skeletons, and body types was relied on during this early period for research data, illustration of theory, and evidence for drawing conclusions. Louis Agassiz, the natural historian who founded Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology in 1859, believed that all species, including humans, had been divinely created for certain "zoological provinces" (Stanton 1960:100-112). To confirm the existence of biologically distinct human groups and to test for the persistence of racial characteristics through time and environmental change, Agassiz sought reliable visual evidence of anatomical variation among African-born slaves and

Continued on next page
their American-born progeny in the pre-Civil War United States. He accordingly studied, measured, and had photographed at least eight individuals from different tribes and regions of Africa (including two of their American-born offspring), all of whom were working on plantations outside of Columbia, South Carolina (fig. 1). The fifteen daguerreotypes that he commissioned from photographer J. T. Zealy are unprecedented early examples of the scientific use of photography as well as extremely rare images of African Americans before the Civil War.

These images raise disturbing questions about the anthropological camera as a weapon of power, a problem inherent in the ambiguous relationship between photographer and subject, as noted by Susan Sontag (1977), Roland Barthes (1981), and others. Because the relationship between photographer and living human subject is far more problematic cross-culturally than within a single culture, the terms and results of the anthropological photographic encounter must be carefully assessed. Although studio portraits were an index of social success for the prospering middle classes of industrialized societies, the Zealy daguerreotypes were undertaken in a context of dominance and oppression. Their subjects presumably had little to say about the way in which they were visually presented. As Elinor Reichlin, who originally identified the daguerreotypes, noted (1977:5),

it is ironic that these pictures, made to demonstrate the supposed inferiority of their subjects, instead conferred a kind of immortality on the men and women we know only as Renty and Delia, Jem and Jack. It was no consolation for the humiliation they endured both as slaves and as objects of scientific curiosity, but a rare gain for those who now encounter these people as memorably real survivors of a painful epoch.

In 1850 the studio camera had already become a useful and probing tool, with both the potential for abuse and the ability to record for posterity some essential truths about the human condition.
Museum took the camera to Copán, Honduras, on one of its first research expeditions in 1891. Operating under a ten-year concession from the Honduran government, John G. Owens arrived in December and began to excavate and photograph the impressive monuments of the Classic Maya site. On 23 January 1893, three weeks before his sudden death in the field, Owens wrote "My work on Mound #26 is revealing what must have been a most magnificent sculptured stairway on the western slope of the mound" (Bowditch Papers).

Gordon documented the stages of his work with dozens of photographs, as he lifted the stones with a hoist, moved them by ox-cart, and laid them out in the courtyard (fig. 2). His goal was to record them so that they could "be reproduced in the Museum at Cambridge for further investigation and study" (Gordon 1896:8). So little was known about Maya hieroglyphic writing at the time that there was no way to reconstruct the original sequence of the stairway with any certainty, and numerous pieces were left stacked about the courtyard. When Sylvanus G. Morley visited the site for the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., more than two decades later, he reported that the "wreckage of America's greatest aboriginal effort in the science of writing" still lay in "inextricable confusion" in the plaza (Morley 1920:241). "Indeed," Morley wrote (ibid.:vi), no exhaustive study of the Copán inscriptions could have been completed without recourse to the rich collections in the Peabody Museum, not only of original sculptures and casts, but also of hundreds of early unpublished photographs . . .

As Morley intimated, the Copán expedition's visual record has proved to be exceedingly valuable. Because of the destruction and erosion suffered by excavated stones, the original photographs are our only means of seeing the glyphs as they first emerged. They serve also as valuable corroborative evidence for the field notes of the early investigators (Gordon Willey 1985: personal communication). In the late 1930s, when the Carnegie Institution decided to sort out and rebuild the 2,500-glyph stairway, its archaeologists acknowledged that the undertaking could not have been carried out without the original Peabody expedition notes and photographs (Carnegie Institution 1937:4).

Making Deals with Modernity
A century ago resistance to photography on the part of native peoples was usually attributed to superstition and ignorance. It has since become obvious that the deeper issue was always vulnerability: being "exposed" on someone else's terms. Intimacy carries with it a burden of respect and responsibility (Hinsley 1981:199), and photographic intimacy, which involves a special exposure of human lives, adds a special need for sensitivity.

In 1958, and during several return visits in the 1960s, Harvard
anthropologist David Maybury-Lewis and his wife, Pia, lived in central Brazil among the Shavante Indians, a hunting-and-gathering people with a reputation as fierce and hostile warriors. The Shavante came into contact with Euro-Americans in the early 1950s, and Maybury-Lewis described their first encounter with metal fishhooks, bullets, tape recorders, and the camera (Maybury-Lewis 1965). Using a 35mm camera and black-and-white film, the Maybury-Lewises captured scenes of male initiation rites while the Shavante were still relatively unfamiliar with the camera and Western culture (fig. 3).

In 1982 the Maybury-Lewises returned to the Shavante to examine the effects of twenty years of Western contact. William Crawford, a professional photographer, accompanied them to illustrate the changes (Crawford 1983). Photographic technology had improved since 1958, but the Shavante had changed too (Crawford 1985: personal communication):

The Indians had all seen photographs and many owned photographs of themselves or of members of their families. Yet I found that they were often uncomfortable when a camera was around, far more uncomfortable than David had remembered from two decades before. Now they made it clear that they would only be photographed as they wanted to see themselves, at their best, in their best modern clothes, but still looking like Shavante.

Crawford created instant images and gave them to the Shavante to encourage them to pose for more formal portraits (fig. 4). Their reluctance to be photographed was no match for their desire to own a photograph. "From the Indians' point of view, it was an acceptable deal," Crawford later reflected (1985: personal communication).

On a planet made smaller by the omnipresence of global telecommunications, photography wields more influence than ever before and carries heavier ethical burdens. Because the ethical issues are not inherent in the technology itself but derive from its uses, the impact of photography depends less on the
Scholars, symposia, and seminars

Department of Anthropology

Prof. Kwang-chih Chang chaired the Scientific Committee for the Archaeological Exhibitions of Han to Tang China in Venice, Italy. He arranged the Summer Institute of World Prehistory at Peking University, September, 1985, and September, 1986, with grants from the CSCPRC and from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Prof. Chang co-organized and co-chaired the Conference on Ancient China and Social Science Generalizations, at Washington, D.C., in June. He organized an interdisciplinary project under Academia Sinica to engage in the field research of Taiwan history (1600-1945). Recent publications by Prof. Chang are Six Lectures on Archaeology (in Chinese), Peking: Wenwu Press, and (Translator), Eastern Zhou and Qin Civilizations, by Li Xueqin, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Professors Chang, C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky and Gordon R. Willey were the principal speakers at a debate on the Origins of Civilization held at the Peabody Museum in April. Moderated by Robert McC. Adams, Secretary, The Smithsonian Institution, the debate was sponsored by the Archaeological Institute of America, Boston Society and the Peabody Museum. Respondents in the debate were Prof. Wei-ming Tu, Harvard, Prof. Arthur Demarest, Vanderbilt, and Prof. Elizabeth Stone, SUNY, Stony Brook.

Assoc. Prof. Byron Good presented a lecture entitled "Meaning, Medicine, and the Social Transformation of Sickness" on Nov. 21, 1985, as the Olive Wyse Honor Lectureship at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. He became Editor-in-Chief of Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry on July 1 and was promoted to Associate Professor of Medical Anthropology at Harvard Medical School this spring. In his role as Editor of Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry, he traveled to Asia (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand), Turkey, and Europe this summer.

Assoc. Prof. Jane I. Guyer gave a paper entitled "On the Multiplication of Labor" at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, in December. "Seasonality in Anthropological Perspective: a Comment" was the title of a paper presented at a workshop on Seasonal Causes of Household Food Insecurity, IFPRI/FAO/AID, in Annapolis, MD. Prof. Guyer is co-curator of the Peabody Museum exhibit To Dance the Spirit: Masks of Liberia. She was awarded a Bunting Institute Fellowship by Radcliffe College, 1986-87, and was a finalist for the Herskovits Award of the African Studies Association for a monograph published in 1984. Prof. Guyer's current research includes studies towards a History of African Marriage and Comparative Perspectives on the Division of Labor in African Rural Economies. She has accepted an appointment as Professor of Anthropology at Boston University.


Prof. Arthur Kleinman gave the keynote address on Culture and the Meaning of Illness" at a Conference on Medical Anthropology and Traditional Medical Systems, sponsored by the French Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity, Paris, February, 1986. On sabbatical leave for 6 months he will spend two months in France, one in Geneva at WHO, and 3 doing research supported by Wenner Gren and the Committee on Scholarly Research with the People’s Republic of China.

Assistant Prof. Dorinne K. Kondo presented a paper entitled "Gender, Class and Identity: Middle-Class Housewives and Part-Time Workers" at a seminar series on Gender in Japanese Society at Yale. "Writing, Violence and the Reconstitution of Self" was the title of a paper at a faculty seminar series on the Symbolism of Violence, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale, in March.

Recent publications of Prof. C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky include "The Longue Durée of the Ancient Near East" published in De L’Indus Aux Balkans, ed. L. Huot, Paris. "The Emergence of Writing: Mesopotamia, Egypt and The Indus Civilizations" is the title of an article published in Research and Reflections in Archaeology and History: Essays in Honor of Doris Stone, ed. E. Wyllys Andrews V, Middle American Research Institute, 57, Tulane Univ., New Orleans. Prof. Lamberg-Karlovsky gave a paper on his collaborative USSR-USA excavations at the Bronze Age site of Sarazm in Central Asia at the 3rd USA/USSR archaeological exchange conference held at the Smithsonian Institution in May. Prof. Lamberg-Karlovsky has edited the first volume of the final report of excavations in Iran, entitled Excavations at Tepe Yahya 1967-1975: The Early Periods published by the Peabody Museum’s American School of Prehistoric Research: 38. Prof. Lamberg-Karlovsky will be the guest lecturer for "Russia and The Land of Tamerlane," a Peabody Museum sponsored trip to the USSR in April, 1987.


Prof. Robert Maddin organized the 10th anniversary conference for The Metals Museum of Sendai, Japan and will give the keynote lecture at that conference in October. He also organized an international symposium on "The Beginning of the Use of Metals and Alloys" to take place in October in Zhengzhou, China. Prof. Maddin gave a lecture at a conference on Continued on next page
Low Energy Dislocations at the University of Virginia in August. His current research interests include field work in Turkey (Kas shipwreck), on metals from Cayönü, Turkey, and on early metallurgy in Sardinia. Recent publications include "Iron in Anatolia and the nature of the Hittite iron industry," *Anatolian Studies*, 1985, XXXV, (with J.D. Muhly, T. Stech and E. Ozgen) and "The analysis of iron artifacts from Palaeaphos-Skales," *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus*, 1985, with T. Stech and J.D. Muhly.

**Prof. David Maybury-Lewis** delivered the Distinguished Lecture at the Brazilian Anthropological Association Meetings in March 1986. He also spoke at the opening of the Festival of American Folklife, at the Smithsonian Institution in June. Prof. Maybury-Lewis testified (as President of Cultural Survival) before a Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations concerning multilateral banks and indigenous peoples. This was part of a concerted effort by Cultural Survival and other environmental and human rights organizations to persuade the multilateral development banks to respect both the environment and the human rights of indigenous populations in areas where their loans are financing development. His testimony was published in the Senate's record of the hearing and in the Cultural Survival Quarterly 10 (1), 1986. Prof. Maybury-Lewis was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship and a Fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Affairs in Washington. He will spend the Spring of 1987 in Washington.


**Assistant Prof. Pauline E. Peters** presented a paper entitled "Rank, Gender and Property in Botswana" to the Council on African Studies at Yale in November. A paper entitled "Typologies and Empty Boxes: Gender Analysis in Research on Agrarian Change" was presented at a seminar on Beyond the International Decade for Women: Roles for Social Scientists, sponsored by the Program on Anthropology, Graduate School, CUNY, New York. "Contexts of Debate and a Changing Sense of 'Us'" was the title of a paper presented to the Workshop on Perspectives on Consciousness in southern Africa which she organized with Prof. Leroy Vail (History Dept., Harvard) on behalf of the Harvard Committee on African Studies in May. Prof. Peters co-edited a volume of Conference Proceedings, 1986, *Conceptualizing the Household*, edited by Jane I. Guyer and Pauline E. Peters. She is the author of a paper entitled "The Ideology and Practice of Tswana Borehole Syndicates: Cooperative or Corporation?" in *Cooperatives and Rural Development* D.W. Attwood and B.S. Baviskar (eds.) (Oxford Univ. Press 1986) (in press). Prof. Peters will be in Malawi (Central Africa) from July to January 1987 and again in March 1987 participating in an interdisciplinary research project on the effects of agricultural commercialization on food consumption and nutrition in a rural area.

**Prof. David Pilbeam** gave a lecture on "The origin of Man" at Darwin College, Cambridge. He and his wife, Dr. M. Ruvolo, attended the opening by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II of the exhibition *The Human Story*, at Commonwealth Institute, London. Prof. Pilbeam served as design consultant for the exhibition which was sponsored by IBM. He gave the Distinguished Lecture at the annual meetings of the A.A.A. entitled "Hominoid evolution and hominin origins." The lecture was published in *American Anthropology*, 88, 1986. "Human Origins" was the title of the David Skomp Distinguished Lecture which Prof. Pilbeam gave at the Univ. of Indiana in March. His research on hominoid evolution continues at sites in Pakistan, Kenya, and Cameroon, and will begin soon in Indonesia.

**Assistant Prof. Margaret J. Schoeninger** gave a number of invited lectures in 1986 including "The Longest Record: The Human Career in Africa" at A Conference in Honor of J. Desmond Clark held at Berkeley. "Stability of human diet at Pecos Pueblo during a period of exchange with plains hunter-gatherers" was the title of a paper at meetings of the American Assoc. of Physical Anthropologists in Albuquerque. The paper was published in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 69 (2). "Bone chemistry and past behavior," the title of a paper given at the School of American Research in Santa Fe, will be published in a volume on *Reconstructing Prehistoric Human Diet*. At the Gordon Conference in California Prof. Schoeninger gave a paper on "Diet estimation based on trace element concentration and collagen isotope ratios." The *Journal of Human Evolution*, 14, 1985 published "Bone Chemistry and Past Behavior: An Overview" authored by T.D. Price, M.J. Schoeninger, and C.J. Armelagos. In July Prof. Schoeninger worked with Dr. Sam Stout at the Univ. of Missouri studying the histomorphometrics of bone thin sections of people recovered from Pecos Pueblo in New Mexico. She was one of the instructors at the Harvard/Kenya National Museums Field School in August and in early September will be a visiting lecturer in the Dept. of Anthropology at the Univ. of Cape Town.

**Prof. Gordon R. Willey** and Peter Mathews edited *A Consideration of the Early Classic Period in the Maya Lowlands*, a volume published by the Institute of Mesoamerican Studies, Albany. "The Classic Maya Socio-political Order: A study in Coherence and Instability" was published in *Research and Reflections*.
in Archaeology and History: Essays in Honor of Doris Stone, Middle American Research Institute, 57, Tulane Univ., New Orleans. An article on "The Postclassic of the Maya Lowlands: A Preliminary Overview" was published by the Univ. of New Mexico Press in Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic.

Museum curators and staff

Dr. Jason W. Clay is a Research Associate at the Peabody Museum, Research Director of Cultural Survival, Inc. and Editor of the Cultural Survival Quarterly. He attended a conference on The Dilemma of Incompatible Priorities: Ethiopian Government Policy and Voluntary Agencies held at St. Anthony's College, Oxford. Dr. Clay gave a lecture entitled "Villagization and Producers' Cooperatives in Hararghe, Ethiopia: Recent Human Rights Violations Reported by Ethiopian Refugees in Somalia." The same topic was the subject of an address he gave to members of American humanitarian agencies working in Ethiopia at the Institute for Policy Studies in Wash., D.C. Dr. Clay and Bonnie K. Holcomb are the authors of a monograph titled Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 1984-1985, Cultural Survival Report #20. Dr. Clay began a research project in June on humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia based on interviews with Western assistance agency personnel who have returned from that country.

Dr. Rosemary A. Joyce, Asst. Curator for preColumbian Archaeology has been appointed Assistant Director of the Peabody Museum. In April Dr. Joyce presented a paper on "Late Classic to Postclassic: Transformation of Lowland Maya Political Ideology" at the Society of American Archaeology meetings held in New Orleans. While there she studied the Ulua Valley (Honduras) collections at the Middle American Research Institute of Tulane Univ. for comparison with collections at the Peabody Museum. Two papers delivered at academic conferences in Wash. D.C. were titled: "Intraregional Ceramic Variation and Class: Developmental Trajectories of Classic Period Ceramic Complexes of the Ulua Valley," and "The Terminal Classic Ceramics of Cerro Palenque, Honduras." A recent paper published in American Antiquity 51, (2), 1986 is titled "Terminal Classic Interaction on the Southeastern Maya Periphery."

Dr. John F. Merkel (Center for Archaeological Research and Development) attended the American Schools of Oriental Research Summer Institute in Philadelphia on the archaeological history of Syria-Palestine. Recent fieldwork included excavations at the Roman site of Stojnik in Yugoslavia and work on Sicani copper smelting at Batan Grande, Peru, a site being excavated by Assoc. Prof. Izumi Shimada.

Victoria Swerdlow, Collections Manager at the museum gave a paper on "Planning for Conservation: Storage" at meetings of the American Assoc. of Museums in New York. She has been appointed to the Review Committee on Documentation of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Dr. John Tomenchuk gave a paper titled "Examining the Need for Parametric Approaches in Use-Wear Studies" at the Canadian Archaeological Assoc. meetings held in Toronto in April. During the final year of his Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Peabody Museum he will continue to develop microcomputer software for application in parametric use-wear studies. His highly interactive modular-program stores information in Standard DIF-file format and includes instructional graphics and help-test screens. Through a unique customizing routine, users of his software can create printer-files for most CENTRONICS parallel-type printers on the market today. FORTH-based versions of his application software, to be called Parametric Use-Wear Analyst, will be available some time in 1987 for IBM, Apple, and Commodore micro-computers.

Visiting lecturers

During the academic year 1985-1986, a number of scholars from the United States and abroad gave lectures to students and faculty of the Anthropology Department and at meetings of the Peabody Museum Association.

Dr. Tamotsu Aoki, Visiting Scholar from the Faculty of Human Sciences at Osaka University, gave a lecture entitled "Mountain God and State God: Cosmology, Power, and Self in Contemporary Japan."

Dr. Eber Hampton, Director, American Indian Program, Harvard Grad. Sch. of Education, gave a lecture on "Renewed Traditions: Transition to Modern Society."

"Archaeology in the Soviet Union" was the title of a paper presented by Drs. Valeri Guilai and Vladimir Bashilov, Academy of Sciences, U.S.S.R. and the Inst. of Archaeology, Moscow. The title of a lecture by Sir Edmund Leach, F.B.A., Prof. Emeritus in Social Anthropology, Univ. of Cambridge, was "The Presentation of the Self in Holiday Life."

Dr. Veena Das, Univ. of Delhi spoke on "Femininity and Orientation to the Body." Dr. Amrit Srinivasan, Univ. of Delhi, gave a talk on "Male, Female" in Bakhthi Cosmology: The Temple Dancers and Musicians of Tamil-Nadu.

Ravi Kapur, Visiting Prof. in Social Medicine and History of Religion gave a lecture on "Yoga and Psychoanalysis."

"Current Research on International Relations" was the topic of a talk by Michael G. Smith, Prof. of Anthropology at Yale.

Dr. John Grayzel, Visiting Prof. of Anthropology at Boston Univ. gave a lecture on "Applied Anthropology and the National State." "I am a Fieldnote: Fieldnotes and Anthropological Identity" was the title of a lecture by Prof. Jean Jackson, M.I.T. "Digging up the Destitute: Confrontation Politics and Historical Archaeology in Adelaide, South Australia" was the title of a lecture.
Photogrammetry, Computers, and the Origins of Writing

THOMAS WIGHT BEALE

Thomas Wight Beale is a Research Associate at the Peabody Museum and former Executive Director of the American Schools of Oriental Research. He was born in New York City and educated at Harvard, receiving his undergraduate degree in Classics (1971) and the Ph.D. in Anthropology (1978). He was a Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows in 1976-1978.

Dr. Beale is the author, with C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Editor) of Tepe Yahya 1967-1975: The Early Periods, and has written a number of articles in academic journals. He spent many years excavating the Neolithic levels at the site of Tepe Yahya in Iran, and more recently has directed archaeological surveys for Neolithic sites in the Yarmouk Valley of Northern Jordan.

Recent issues of Symbols have dealt with the character and ideological origins of the earliest high civilizations of the Near East, China, and the New World. The success or failure of such discussions rests ultimately on the quality of detail we can glean about the daily life, social structure, economic organization, and general functioning of these earliest high civilizations. The limiting factor in these debates lies in the still remarkably bare and sketchy picture we actually have of these early civilizations, especially in their developmental stages. Our existing data base potentially can fit a variety of competing theories, and it is difficult to disprove or prove arguments when we still know so little about how these early cultures functioned.

In this article, I would like to take these discussions in a different direction and describe some new tools and technologies that are becoming available and that may ultimately help unlock some of the critical details we lack about the structure of developing civilizations. My particular research interest is in the origins and early development of writing in the Near East. The stage at which writing first appears in Sumer (modern Iraq) and Elam (modern Iran) coincides with the emergence of the first urbanized cultures in these areas. The early Sumerian script is reasonably well understood, but Proto-Elamite writing has never been deciphered.

To the degree that we understand the Proto-Elamite number system, which combines both decimal and sexagesimal notation, the earliest texts appear to be purely economic in nature. If we had a better understanding of the contents of these earliest texts and of who was writing them and for what purpose, we would for the first time possess crucial clues about this civilization’s economic organization at a critical stage of its development.

Significant new developments in the field of photogrammetric instrumentation are now helping us in our analysis, seriation, and possible eventual decipherment of these earliest economic texts. Photogrammetry is the science of making accurate measurements from photographs. Taking accurate measurements of three-dimensional physical data is a major part of the research process in both epigraphy and archaeology (site plans, architectural plans, reliefs, objects, pottery, inscriptions, etc.). For decades, photogrammetry has been one of several techniques available to record three-dimensional data, but it has seen only limited use in archaeology and epigraphy. The major drawback has been the high cost of equipment and trained personnel to achieve a level of accuracy comparable to other, simpler recording methods. The requirement of a skilled and trained photogrammetrist both to record data and then to process it also limited photogrammetry’s acceptance among archaeologists.

A new proto-type photogrammetry system designed and built by H. Dell Foster Associates of San Antonio has recently been installed at Harvard (in the Semitic Museum) and promises to make photogrammetry much more accessible to researchers. Based on the same type of technological advances that are now part of the onboard mapping and terrain-following video tracking systems used in F-111 and F-16 fighter planes, it is designed to put directly into the hands of the individual scholar a research tool that he or she can use and operate directly from the initial data recording stage to the final drawing, mapping, and computer analysis of data, and at minimal cost relative to commercial photogrammetric mapping systems.

This new system, owned by the American Schools of Oriental Research (a consortium of research institutions of which the Peabody Museum is a member), uses off-the-shelf 35mm single lens reflex cameras for recording data rather than the costly and cumbersome 228mm format of most commercially available aerial photogrammetric cameras. Rather than expensive photogrammetric films used in the larger format cameras, the new system uses standard, universally available Kodachrome transparencies (slide film). Instead of a conventional photogrammetric plotter, the heart of the system (illustrated here) is a specially designed stereo compilation system to digitize and map x-y-z coordinates and contours.
onto a Tektronix computer graphics system. In fact, due to the sharply increased computing power of personal computers over the past few years, software for the system is now being written to run on an IBM PC, XT, or AT. The stereo compilation system and computer program are based on a complex series of mathematical equations from which it is possible, given a set of stereo photographs containing three or more points of known x-y-z coordinate locations, to recover measurements of all objects and features within the stereo viewing area. A key feature of the system’s ease of use and flexibility is that the individual taking the stereo photographs is not required to position or level the camera with the degree of precision necessary in traditional photogrammetry.

Archaeology has the peculiarity of being a research discipline that destroys a major portion of its data base in the very process of recovering it. A major potential of the new system is its capacity to record virtually infinite amounts of three-dimensional information in the field, information which at the time of excavation may not be seen as important, but which from an analytical point of view may later be seen as indispensable. Such data may include site topography and contours, three-dimensional location of artifacts, micro-stratification, orientation of artifacts and sherds to one another, systematic or random arrangement of certain features on a site, etc. There is rarely enough time in the field for the comprehensive recording of all measured data that might be needed in the future. With a minimum of field recording time, the new system can provide a permanent data archive from which new data can be retrieved with great accuracy long after the expedition has left the field or the site destroyed, and this data can be displayed and analyzed through the more direct and powerful medium of computer graphics rather than the traditional but less flexible format of two-dimensional line drawings in descriptive monographs or published articles.

**Photogrammetry and Proto-Elamite**

In my own research on Proto-Elamite, I have been applying this new tool quite literally on the “micro” level, in effect mapping the surface of clay tablets only a few centimeters across and drawing individual Proto-Elamite signs where the maximum dimension in some cases is only 2-4mm. Over a several day period in 1985 I made stereo photographs of approximately fifty Proto-Elamite tablets in the collections of the Louvre in Paris. Using the stereo compilation system here, I am now working to make new, more accurate drawings of the tablets that were originally published more than eighty years ago and am making precise measurements of individual signs.

It is clear from French excavations in the early 1970s at Susa in southwestern Iran (a site now virtually astraddle the battle line in the current Iran-Iraq war) that Proto-Elamite writing undergoes a considerable evolution as a writing system over a several hundred year period starting c. 3000 B.C. The earliest tablets have only numbers scratched on their surface, whereas tablets at the end of the sequence contain in some cases hundreds of...
signs and include multiple sign groups that may be syllabic and represent place-names or the names of individuals.

Because of the difficulties involved in taking precise measurements on fragile tablets and because of the imprecision of the original hand-copied drawings, no detailed study has ever been undertaken of the evolution of the sign-forms within the corpus of approximately 1500 tablets in the Louvre collection. Our new photogrammetric system is now making such a study feasible. With accurate measurements and drawings of individual signs and of the precise manner in which they were formed with a writing implement or stylus, it should be possible to group this large body of texts into rough chronological order. Once the tablets are seriated in this manner, it should then be possible to study which signs appear at which stage, and which types of economic subject matter appear at which stage in the development of the writing system and of the Elamite civilization itself. Ultimately, this approach should increase our chances of deciphering the signs themselves and understanding the economic content of the tablets.

Important features that appear to evolve over time in a measurable way are the shape of the tablets themselves, the density and layout of signs across the surface of the tablets, the sequence of strokes by which individual signs are impressed on the clay surface, the depth and angle of individual sign impressions, and the shape and size of the stylus being used to form the signs.

To conclude this discussion and bring it back to the "macro" level of recent higher level discussions here on the origins of civilization, I would note two interesting facts about the find spots of the early Proto-Elamite tablets. At Susa, the earliest examples (numerical notations only) come from what appear to be private residential areas undistinguished by the monumental architecture or formal layout that would reflect a central administrative complex. In other words, the loci in which these earliest examples of writing were found imply at least the possibility that economic life at this critical developmental stage of civilization (c. 3000 B.C.) was not entirely under centralized control, but that there was an active "private sector". Tablets from a somewhat later date found during the Peabody Museum's excavations at Tepe Yahya in southeastern Iran do come from the floors of what appears to be a central administrative complex with large storage facilities, a meter-thick perimeter (defensive?) wall, and monumental architecture. Even at Tepe Yahya, though, it is interesting to note that the administrative structure appears to be secular in nature. At least, none of the distinct architectural forms, altars, foundation deposits, figurines, and other artifacts typical of a Mesopotamian temple complex were found that would indicate a temple-based central authority at Tepe Yahya.
Interpreting African Masks: The Harley Collection at the Peabody Museum

CHRISTOPHER B. STEINER

Christopher B. Steiner is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in History and Anthropology through the Honors Program in Humanistic Studies at the Johns Hopkins University in 1984. He was one of the curators of the current exhibition of Liberian masks, To Dance the Spirit: Masks of Liberia at the Peabody Museum.

Claude Lévi-Strauss remarks in his book, The Way of the Masks, that among all of the art forms in non-Western cultures the mask represents one of the most striking visual images and asserts the most powerful and affecting presence. "Upsetting the peace of everyday life," writes Lévi-Strauss, "the masks' primal message retains so much power that even today the prophylactic insulation of the showcases fails to muffle its communication" (1982:5).

The mask is truly a captivating visual form. When viewed out of its social setting and particularly behind the glass of an exhibit hall case, the mask's wooden face seems to struggle to speak about its culture and its times. Even the most discerning viewer, however, can never understand the meaning of masks fully by just contemplating the fixed gaze of their self-expression. The voices of the sculpted faces, harmonizing in an exhibit hall like a chorus of chiseled chanters, must be understood not through the mouthpiece of our imagination alone, but through the retrieval of as full an historical and ethnographic setting as research can uncover.

Being unmusical about history and ethnography was a characteristic feature of the West's initial interest in African visual arts. Prior to serious field research on African society and material culture, the masks of Africa were examined out of their ethnographic milieu through a distorting glass of preconceptions. Masks were generally seen as having static religious or "fetishistic" meanings, and their grotesque features were often thought to reflect the putative "primitiveness" of their creators.

Anthropological field research has helped to get rid of some of these myths. African masks are no longer thought of as static, but on the contrary are seen as dynamic objects that must be examined in their cultural context: both in their movement through space during performance and in history through their movement in time.

Masks and social control

George W. Harley, a medical missionary in northeast Liberia from 1926 to 1960 and research associate in African anthropology at Harvard, made one of the earliest contributions toward clarifying our understanding of African masks. During his nearly thirty-five years in northeast Liberia, Harley collected over one thousand masks of various styles from the different ethnic groups of the region, and took copious ethnographic notes that explicate some of the masks' functions and meaning in daily and ritual life.

From 1932 to 1948, many of the masks collected by Harley in Liberia were sold to the Peabody Museum. Today, the Harley collection of masks remains one of the Peabody Museum's earliest, most comprehensive, and best documented collections on a single region of Africa. A representative sample of the nearly four-hundred Harley masks in the Peabody Museum's permanent collection is on display in the current exhibition of Liberian arts at the Peabody, entitled To Dance the Spirit: Masks of Liberia.

When sold to the museum, some ethnographic information accompanied the masks — handwritten by Harley on beige shipping tags that were tied directly to the pieces. Most of the data concerning the objects, however, are found in two monographs written by Harley, Notes on the Poro in Liberia (1941) and Masks as Agents of Social Control in Northeast Liberia (1950) and an ethnographic survey of the region, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (1947), edited by Harley from material gathered by George Schwab, a Presbyterian missionary in the Cameroons, who led the Harvard African Expedition in Liberia during the first eight months of 1928.

From Harley and Schwab's research on the social organization and material life of the peoples of northeast Liberia, we learn that masks were central to political, social, and religious affairs. In Masks as Agents of Social Control, Harley reported that among the Mano and Dan ethnic groups of Liberia carved wooden masks were fully integrated into a hierarchical system of government that controlled law, warfare, communal work, the organization of ritual, and particularly the education of young men and women. He showed how the masks were used by the sacred ruling structure (the leaders of which were known as the zo) to disguise persons who exercised authority and to legitimate certain claims to power.

In the relatively small and tightly knit communities of rural Liberia in

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the 1920s to 1940s, the settlement of disputes concerning land rights between towns and the adjudication of community affairs (including marriage payments, quarrels, and acts of violence) had to be settled by members of the community — participants in all aspects of daily village life. The masks provided anonymity to lawmakers and arbiters by concealing these otherwise recognizable individuals behind a carved visage thought to represent a powerful ancestor or dangerous forest spirit. The disguise, which also included a full body costume made of cloth and raffia fibers, allowed the wearer of the mask to wield tremendous authority, render decisive judgment, and inflict harsh punishment without necessarily suffering the contempt of the village community or the anger of the wrongdoer’s relatives.

Even when the viewers or participants in masked rituals and judgment ceremonies suspected the wearer’s identity — and often they probably did have an inclination as to who might be wearing the mask — the masking institution was structured in such a way that the wearer’s anonymity was respected and the ‘secret of the masks’ was maintained. As Harley notes in *Masks as Agents of Social Control*:

> At the very end of the [initiation] session the boys saw Gbini ge as a man dancing with a mask on his face but no costume to cover the rest of his body. [They] had seen this mask before as a fully costumed ‘spirit’ dancing in town and later presiding at the ritual of scarification in the Poro. Now [they were] permitted to see that the mask was worn by a man and was not a spirit from the forest. The boys may have already suspected this but no one dared talk about it. (1950:5)

Thus, the mask wearer’s anonymity was not based entirely on the participants’ ignorance, but rather rested on a shared understanding that the whole community — including women and uninitiated children who were not supposed to know any of the secrets of masking — maintain silence on these matters.

**Masks and secrecy**

In *Notes on the Poro in Liberia* and *Masks as Agents of Social Control*, Harley uncovered an important link between masks and secrecy. He showed that masks were connected with the secret powers of the forest; he demonstrated the extent to which masks were used in rituals associated with the mysteries of human maturation; and, most importantly, he reported on the extensive use of masks in secret society affairs.

Among the Mano and some neighboring cultural groups, masks and masking are particularly prominent in the Poro society. The Poro is a male secret society with powerful functions and wide-ranging influence. Leaders of the Poro control the initiation of boys. In forest
Fire prevention mask worn by dancer who inspected women’s cooking hearths for smoldering wood, Liberia. 37-77-50/2707.

Female style entertainment mask associated with initiation, Liberia. 37-77-50/2672.

camps, the boys are circumcised and marked with scars, said to be teeth marks of a mythic forest spirit who swallows them and gives them rebirth as men. During a period lasting as long as four years, the youths are trained in farming, hunting, and building homes. They are educated in local history, cultural values, and esoteric or “secret” knowledge. Above all in initiation the youths are encouraged by the terrifying atmosphere of the camp — with its strict leaders and powerful masks — to be loyal to the men’s society for the rest of their adult lives.

Research has shown that the Dan have no Poro organization, but they do use masks at rituals associated with their male circumcision camp. When Dan boys reach a certain age, they are taken from the village to an isolated camp in the forest. In the seclusion of the forest camp, the boys are circumcised and their status thus symbolically transformed from childhood to adulthood. During the period of initiation, wearers of graceful and fine-featured masks visit the village periodically to demand food for the young initiates.

For the peoples of northeast Liberia, the world can be said to be divided into two distinct domains: village and forest. Masks are associated with the forest, and are thought to be the materialization of dangerous forest spirits. By bringing into the organized realm of the village the obscure and unknown power of the forest beyond, one could say that masked personages function to bridge the distance between these two contrasting domains. Masks link the living and the spirit world.

Masks and performance

Following in the footsteps of George Harley’s pathbreaking research on masks and masking, two German anthropologists, Hans Himmelheber and Eberhard Fischer, have furthered our understanding of masked rituals through their extensive field research among the Dan ethnic group on the Liberia-Ivory Coast border. Over the years, they have carefully studied the function and meaning of masks in ritual, and have published their material in numerous articles and books, including their most recent work entitled *The Arts of the Dan in West Africa* (1984).

Reflecting a current trend in the anthropological study of ritual, Fischer and Himmelheber have stressed the performative or “staged” aspect of the masked rituals of the Dan. Implicit in their research is the notion that both aesthetics and histrionics are as intrinsic to “masquerades” as the regulation of societal affairs. Masked rituals are not merely, as Harley noted, public enactments of social control, but are also performative events where the aesthetics of mask and costume, the performer’s expertise in dance or skill in bodily movement, are judged critically by the viewers — perfection in these matters being thought crucial to the success of the ritual.

Thus, according to Fischer and Himmelheber, although the masks

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and "masquerades" of the Dan may be associated to a large extent with the powers of potent forest spirits, and may serve to maintain communal order by instilling fear and propagating a certain respect, the ritual enactments also function to entertain the public and to celebrate creativity. In masked performances, therefore, there is a blurred line dividing the "serious business" of ritual from the expressive elements of drama and play.

In their work, Fischer and Himmelheber have outlined the basic features of a masked performance. The arrival of a mask, they note, is a major event for a village community. It takes several days to prepare the festivities and gather people from remote fields. As the mask emerges from the forest, music announces its arrival to the crowds in the village square. The "masquerade" is a complex interactive performance involving the masked figure, its attendants, and the audience. In some examples offered by Fischer and Himmelheber, the mask may chase the audience with its hooked stick, impress them with its skillfully executed dance, or address them in an unintelligible voice that must be "interpreted" by one of the mask's attendants.

Rather than focus, as did Harley, on the collectivity and on the power of masks to subsume individual wills under the collective pressures of societal demands, Fischer and Himmelheber have focused primarily on the prominence of gifted individuals in Dan society. In recent interpretations of masks and masking, such as those by Fischer and Himmelheber as well as Monni Adams (1982), there is evidence to suggest that masked rituals are not so much "equalizing" events where individuality is molded by collective demands, but rather that they serve to heighten individual prestige and reward creativity — as men and women strive to gain renown for their skills in song, acrobatics, and dance.

In research on African art in Western scholarship, the performative element in African aesthetics was first developed systematically by the art historian Robert Farris Thompson in his book *African Art in Motion* (1974). In this seminal work, Thompson argued that the arts of Africa ought to be studied in motion, that is, as the arts are used in dance and in performance. He stressed that African aesthetic experience is constituted through multiple media — music, dance, and the plastic arts — and that the study or exhibition of African art removed from its ethnographic setting may be misleading since it displays the object out of its kinetic milieu. From Thompson's research on African art, one learns that when viewing the masks of Africa in the artificial atmosphere of an exhibit hall case, one must imagine the mask in action, as the masked face of a dancing figure appears and reappears from behind the swirl of a cloth or fiber costume that spins to the rhythm of a master drummer.

**Masks and time**

Motion, of course, can be either spatial or temporal. In performance, masks swirl through space; in history, masks move through time. While Thompson, together with Fischer and Himmelheber and others, have elucidated the ways in which the arts of Africa spin in space, little has actually been said about how African arts span time.

The masks of the Dan and their neighbors provide a splendid example in which history has significantly influenced the function and meaning of carved masks. In Harley's publications, which report on masks and masking in northeast Liberia during the late 1920s to 1940s, there is a tremendous emphasis on the use of masks for judgment and the control of warfare. By the 1950s, when Himmelheber first arrived among the Dan on the Liberia-Ivory Coast border, and also more recently when his son Eberhard Fischer joined him, the masks appear to be used far more for entertainment and less for serious judicial arbitration and peacemaking.

Over the decades that span the research, conditions in this region of West Africa have changed dramatically. Throughout this period, the central government sought — with varying degrees of success — to break the power of secret societies and abolish warfare. Alterations in the nature and functioning of these various institutions were drastic. Increased opportunities for young men to earn cash, both on rubber plantations and in the capital, took able men away from the village and disrupted the patterns of communal life. In the recent past, changes have accelerated even more.

The institution of masking is affected by history or the passage of time in two different ways. On the one hand, there is the general past or collective time that comprises the history of events that shape the institution of masking as a whole. And, on the other, there is the significant past or biographical time that defines the individual meaning of a particular mask. When taken as an ensemble, the masks function within the collective time of society. Like society itself, the institution of masking is affected by changes brought about through shifting historical conditions. Thus, for instance, when peace is enforced largely through government directives, masks associated with warfare no longer serve to control war.

Masks, however, also function like individuals within biographical time. Like an individual, a mask changes through time, as it is created, matures, gains power, and eventually perishes. Biographical time intersects collective time. Thus, when warfare is abolished, masks that were once associated with war may take on new and different functions. The individual history of a mask, then, is intertwined within the collective history of masking which, in turn, is shaped by larger historical events.

The need to incorporate biographical time into the interpretation of Liberian masks is most striking in the attempts by Western scholars to develop a typology of the masks. Overwhelmed by the great number of different mask styles, researchers on the arts of northeast Liberia have sought to create order out of this variety by classifying the masks according to form and function.

When classifying the function of the masks of northeast Liberia, there is an immediate problem, however, for a mask may change function through time. P. J. L. Vandenhoue (1948) was one of the first to observe that because the power of a mask derives largely from its owner's status, a mask...
may be elevated or demoted in rank and function as it changes hands. Thus, a mask originally carved to perform as an entertainer might eventually serve a more important role, such as a judge or peacemaker. On the other hand, a mask initially intended to stop war may be demoted to a different function.

In his research on the Mano and Dan, Harley recorded the function of a mask as it was given to him at the time of collection. His data, therefore, only provide information on the role of a mask at a particular historical moment. Although this sort of classification reveals far more than the purely stylistic ones that predate his field research on the function of masks, his typology is, in fact, a bit misleading.

In order to capture the "fluidity" of mask functions, Fischer and Himmelheber have concentrated on classifying masked performances rather than masks alone. Thus, their typology takes account of the performative context: costume, headdress, colors, dance movement, and characteristic behavior of the masked figure. They have proposed eleven types of "masquerades" and suggested the ideal form of mask for each function. This last aspect of their typology, they stress, cannot fit the dynamic of reality, but it does indicate possible associations between form and function.

Because the role of individual masks can only be understood when viewed through time, one would need "life histories" of specific masks in order to document accurately their function in ritual and other affairs. This sort of information, however, is not readily available in the existing literature. Using Harley's data as a starting point for further research, more fieldwork in the same area may clarify the meaning of masks in history, and shed light on the changing functions of individual masks through time.

Masks and the spirit of history

As anthropologists turn their attention more and more to the dynamics of non-Western societies, we are becoming increasingly aware that the notion of changeless "primitive" cultures or the vision
of a people without history — an image that typified earlier anthropological works — is highly unsatisfactory. In moving away from our focus on the static elements of “primitive” culture, and in our departure from analyzing strictly a timeless “ethnographic present,” we are beginning to pay greater attention to a society’s history and more especially to the ways in which individual lives are shaped and made meaningful by a people’s own vision or interpretation of their past.

Because masks, like people, exist in history we must turn our attention increasingly to the movement of masks through time and to the role of masks in shaping historical consciousness. Individual masks, we have already noted, change meaning and function as they move through history, but the institution of masking as a whole provides continuity with earlier generations and former times. Though history may too to alter a mask’s function and meaning as it changes hands, the mask’s frozen face forever remains the same. Like its arrested gaze, which is suggestive of its immutability, masks fix social reality by representing continuity with the past.

One interpretation of ritual is that rites present people with a vision of their culture and their history. Clifford Geertz, for example, has written that the function of ritual is largely interpretive, and that in ritual enactments people tell a story about themselves to themselves. By symbolizing the remembered past, masks tell a story about bygone days and the way things used to be; one of the functions of masks is in the construction of people’s meaningful past.

During the 1920s to 1930s, under strict government directives to disband traditional judgment councils and abolish the use of powerful masks, Harley reports that an important Mano judge named Gbana continued to use an old mask carved for his grandfather during the mid-nineteenth century. In an atmosphere of rapid change, with the central government of Liberia taking on greater and greater administrative control, Gbana persisted to wrestle for power and to make laws or decrees and enforce justice with his powerful old mask. By using this relic from his people’s past, was Gbana simply invoking the power of a forest spirit? Or was he not also invoking the power of history, and the spirit of an earlier era represented by the mask?

Acknowledgments

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RES
by Francesco Pellizzi

RES, a journal of anthropology and aesthetics published at the Peabody Museum, is now entering its sixth year. RES is a multidisciplinary periodical that promotes and brings together research on "art" objects, their relation to the cultural settings in which they originated, and the motivations behind their making and use. Founded by Francesco Pellizzi and Remo Guidieri, RES was inspired by the recognition that the time was ripe for a dialogue between anthropologists and other thinkers on the interpretation of aesthetic objects: the specific study of art had long been condemned to a marginal position among anthropological sub-disciplines, and yet many innovative scholars from related fields, such as art history and philosophy, seemed eager to apply insights and generalizations derived from anthropology. The presence at Harvard of two great institutions with a different but parallel involvement in the study of art — the Peabody and the Fogg Art museums — makes it a particularly well-suited location for such a multi-disciplinary enterprise.

Francesco Pellizzi, current Editor of RES, has been at Peabody Museum since 1967, first as Harkness Fellow, then as Teaching Fellow and member of the Harvard Chiapas Project, and for the last twelve years as Associate in Middle American Ethnology. He received an M.A. in Social Anthropology from Harvard University (1969). Previously he had studied for three years at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale of the Collège de France, Paris — under C. Lévi-Strauss — and obtained a d.Litt. in the Classics and the History of Religions at the University of Rome (1967). He has written articles on witchcraft, ethnomusicology, interethic relations, mythology, and primitive and contemporary art. Since 1973, at its beginnings, he was involved in the Art and Anthropology program of collaboration between Peabody and the Fogg; also since that date and now in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia of Mexico, he has been promoting the creation of a regional Maya Textile Museum in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. He is now Adjunct Professor of Art History at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Art and Science.

Remo Guidieri, currently Associate Editor of RES, is Maitre d'Enseignement and Professor of Architecture at the University of Paris X, Nanterre, where he also directs the Equipe de Recherche sur les objets de Culte et de Croyance (at the Laboratoire d'Ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparée), a research group on primitive art that provides close and sustained collaboration with RES. He is Docteur d'Etat and laureate of the Route des Morts (1979), a study of a Solomon island funerary complex; L'Abondance des Pauvres (1984), a reevaluation of the notions of reciprocity and exchange in anthropology; and many articles on anthropology, contemporary art, and other subjects.

Joseph Rykwert, at present, the only member of RES’s Editorial Counsel, is Professor of Architecture at the University of Cambridge, England, and Adjunct Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He is well known as one of the world’s most prominent historians and critics of architecture. His many books include The House of Adam in Paradise, a study of the archetype of the primeval hut in the history of Western architecture; The Idea of the Town, on the roots of Western urbanism in Etruscan cities; The first Modern, on French eighteenth-century architecture; and The Necessity of Artifice, a collection of essays. He is currently working on a monograph on The Orders of Architecture, a first installment of which appeared in RES 11 SPRING 1986. Professor Rykwert has had a long interest and practice in bringing together the concerns of art historians — particularly of the "Warburg school" variety — with those of anthropologists and philosophers.


RES’s activities are about to expand into the publication of a new series of books by Cambridge University Press, to be called RES Monographs. The aim and focus of the series will be very close to RES’s: to provide a forum for innovative and comparative thinking on object making and aesthetic theory from the perspective of different but complementary disciplines. Again as in RES, the effort will be to avoid any superficial syncretism of disciplines and to bring about a true confrontation of insights from related fields of research. It is in this way, RES’s editors feel, that the juxtaposition of distantly connected and only apparently heterogeneous subjects can help open new paths of inquiry for all the disciplines involved.

RES is published twice a year by the Peabody Museum, in generously illustrated volumes averaging 120 pages. Since 1985, its worldwide distribution has been taken over by Cambridge University Press, 32 East 57th St., New York, NY 10019. CUP is in charge of selling back issues and can still provide the complete collection, beginning with the first issue of Spring 1981.

Subscriptions are by calendar year. Price for each year is $25 for individuals, $40 for institutions.

Martha Lamberg-Karlovsky is the Editor of Symbols
camera than on the person standing behind it. There is no longer any doubt about the power of the medium to shape consciousness, but questions remain. How will knowledge gained from this technology be sought after and ultimately used? The photograph has been witness to the interaction of human beings in an uncertain venture - the attempt to know ourselves through studying others. We turn to the photograph to learn something fundamental about the anthropological endeavor.

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Visiting Lecturers
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by Prof. J.V.S. Megaw, Flinders Univ., South Australia. "Kebara Man" was the title of a lecture by Dr. Baruch Arensburg, a Visiting Scholar from Tel-Aviv Univ.

Dr. Wesley Cowan, Curator of Archaeology at the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History gave a talk on "The Growth and Decline of Farming Communities in Southwestern Ohio: Perspectives on Current Port Ancient Research." Sherwood Washburn, Prof. of Anthropology Emeritus at Berkeley gave a lecture on "Human Evolution." "Long Distance Trade and Politics: 19th century Aro-Chukwu and 20th century Jos" was the topic of a lecture by Mark Anikbo, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, Univ. of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Prof. K.T.M. Hegde, University of Baroda, India gave a lecture on "Ancient Indian Zinc Distillation Technology." Prof. Payson Sheets, Dept. of Anthropology, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder gave a lecture on "Prehistory, Volcanism, and Remote Sensing in the Arenal Area, Guanacaste, Costa Rica." Visiting Prof. Uri Almagor, Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem, spoke on "The Construction of Meaning in an E ast African Society."

Subscription to SYMBOLS

Symbols will be published twice a year by the Peabody Museum and the Department of Anthropology at Harvard. The yearly subscription rate is $4.50.