World Cultures Tour

*3rd Floor, exluding the Egyptian Collection*

**Note:**The World Cultures tour begins at the top of the stairs on the 3rd floor and goes around the exhibits of the top floor.

**Human Evolution and Prehistoric Technology**

In the upper left corner of the display case, you will notice the three most popular evolutionary theories, or evolutionary ‘trees’. Even though one evolutionary tree has yet to prevail over others, all archaeologists agree on one thing: the fundamental role of bipedalism. Along with a biological increase in brain size, bipedalism is said to be a critical trait that distinguishes humans from all other species.

Walking on two feet may be something we take for granted today, but imagine not having the freedom to carry things in your arms. Bipedalism allowed archaic humans to use their arms to gather food, throw hunting spears while running after bisons, and craft tools with finer dexterity thanks to their opposable thumbs – abilities that enabled humankind to better control their environment.

Most archaeologists mark the transition to bipedalism at approximately 3.5 to 4 million years ago. However, new research on *Ardipithecus ramidus* – one of the first hominids of our distinctly human lineage – suggests that bipedalism was possible 4.4 million years ago. The impact of this new evidence is tremendous: if hominids were able to walk almost a million years earlier than previously expected, what other traits also developed that much earlier?

**Ancient Egyptian Stone Ware**

The type of stone selected varied greatly between the Early and the Middle to Late Predynastic periods. For example, diorite, schist and serpentine were employed in the Middle Predynastic Period for the first time, most likely because the increase in foreign trade introduced these new materials. The creation of stone wares reached the height of popularity in the early Dynastic period (3150 BCE), when rare stones and elaborate vessels were considered luxury items and placed in the tombs of the elite as provisions for the afterlife, and not readily used as everyday objects.

**Column Cylinders from Meroe**

The three column cylinders represented here are all from Meroe, the capital of the Kingdom of Kush and a major industrial center in the ancient world, located at the fourth cataract of the Nile River, the modern day Republic of Sudan. The Kingdom of Kush reigned from the 8th to the 4th centuries BCE and maintained a distinctive artistic tradition despite heavy influences from nearby Egyptians and Greeks. The cylinders were unearthed by British archaeologists during the excavation of the royal compound at Meroe between 1909 and 1914.

All three cylinders demonstrate both Egyptian and Grecian influence despite their distinct Meroitic designs and would have been made of ceramic and finished with a blue-green glass glaze called faience. The third cylinder on the far right, a plaster cast of a Meroitic original, demonstrates a Greek Hellenistic style. The four illustrations displayed below show men dancing with a satyr. It has been suggested that this cylinder portrays the cult of the Greek god Bacchus, the patron deity of agriculture and theatre, who was also associated with wine. The iconography may also be associated with the Egyptian god Osiris, the judge of the dead and ruler of the underworld.

**Early Greek Coinage**

The first Greek coins were made of a natural metal mixture of silver and gold called electrum. Prior to these coins, pieces of unstamped iron were used for exchange, where the inherent value of the iron piece would represent its exchange value. By the 6th century BCE, most city-states were producing their own distinct coinage that featured unique symbols representing their domains that would be easily recognizable to people living throughout the Greek world. Symbols on coins ranged from pictures of local products and industry, or portraits of a city-state’s patron deities that were said to protect the city and its people. Examples of these coins can be seen on the left hand side of the display case.

Philip II and his son Alexander the Great regularized coinage across Greece as part of their extending Empire during the period 330-100 BCE. They used the coins of Athens as the standard with pictures of Alexander the Great on their face, such as the ones seen on the right hand side of the display case. This marked the transition from coins representing the diversity of city-states to coins representing the authority and power of political leaders. These coins were also standardized in weight and equivalency. In Greece, denominations used included the *drachm* and the *obol*. Examples of denomination names and values can be seen in the centre chart. Note that the roughly 240 years of coinage represented show little change in imagery or size. The Redpath Museum has a collection of approximately 2300 Greek and Roman coins. These have been published in a volume which is available for consultation at the McGill University library.

**The Roman Table**

Romans typically dined around a family hearth until the 2nd century BCE, when the Greek custom of eating from reclining couches placed around a square table was adopted. In a typical upper class family, the father of a household would occupy a single couch while his wife and children sat on stools along the opposite side of a long table. If dinner were a more formal event involving guests, two additional reclining couches would be added, with the fourth side of the table left open to facilitate access for serving the food. Food was generally eaten with the fingers, using the right hand only. Spoons were the basic utensil used with both ends serving to manipulate the food, which was served in small portions, eliminating the need for knives.

**Adornment in the Ancient Mediterranean**

Greek men tended to prefer full beards and longer hair, while Romans kept their hair short and their faces clean shaven. These generalizations had many exceptions, however, and were subject to changing fashions such as the clipped beard worn by Roman gentlemen circa 130 CE. Women’s hair was kept long and worn in a variety of styles, one of the most popular being tightly curled and pinned into place. Hair ornaments of bone, ivory, or precious metals were common, such as those seen on the bottom right.

It was considered essential for all decent men and women to bathe regularly. Perfumes, oils, and body lotions were popular luxury items, traded throughout the Mediterranean, and stored in ornate bottles and flasks known as unguentaria (displayed on the left), and typically made of glass or stone. Women also wore makeup to enhance their natural beauty. A pale complexion was favoured and achieved by applying powdered chalk or white lead. Rouge made from red iron oxide or ochre clays, such as the sample displayed here, was used to add colour to lips and cheeks. Black eye makeup, stored in glass vessels such as the twin-chambered flask exhibited here, might also be used.

**Masks and Graeco-Roman Theatre**

Theatre was a very important element of Graeco-Roman culture as documented by the numerous masks, figurines, and theatrical images on mosaics, lamps and other artefacts found by archaeologists. Early Roman theatre was strongly influenced by the older tradition of Greek theatre and held several elements – like the use of masks and pantomime performances – in common. In spite of many similarities, however, Roman theatre was not state-sponsored in the Greek manner, and often theatre troupes would only succeed if they could develop successful shows that attracted large audiences.

All actors wore masks, who placed their emphasis on facial expression and body language in their various dramatic, comedic and acrobatic acts. The masks seen here are miniaturized versions of those used in the theatre, and might be bought as keepsakes following performances. Miniature masks were also likely placed in tombs and sanctuaries as offerings to the gods.

**The Greeks and Hades**

Between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, cults associated with Demeter, Orpheus and Dionysus emerged that dealt with the afterlife. These cults preached ideas of an afterlife, and claimed that a morally good life would be rewarded after death while a morally deficient one would lead to eternal torment. The dead were typically viewed with pity, rather than fear. To prepare the dead for their journey in the afterlife, family and friends placed provisions for the next world into the graves of loved ones and decorated tombs with pictures of feasts and the dead person’s favourite possessions.

The Apulian red-figured vase in the center of the display case depicts a typical Dionysian theme of youths feasting and celebrating. Dionysus, the god of wine, was said to die and become reborn every year, a concept that gave people hope for life after death. These types of vases were often used at*symposiums*, or after dinner parties, and would also be placed in tombs as offerings to the dead.

**The Etruscans and Romans and the Afterlife**

The Etruscans had a language, political system and culture that were distinct from neighbouring groups in ancient Italy and the Mediterranean, although their precise origins in prehistory are unclear. Culture that is identifiably Etruscan developed in Italy after about 800 BCE and showed Greek influence in many ways such as artistic endeavours, although the result was not completely Greek in appearance**.**

On the left is an example of an Etruscan cinerary chest made of terracotta; the deceased is represented by the reclining figure on the lid. The individual’s dress, jewellery and ample belly suggest wealth and power. Cinerary urns were used to contain the ashes of the dead after cremation, which was the norm in Roman Republican and early Imperial times. Urns belonging to those of distinguished lineage were placed in family tombs, while those for the general public were placed in large cemeteries. Many Roman cinerary chests had features typical of houses, reflecting the belief that they were the spiritual counterpart of the home.

**Eye Treatment and Ayurveda Medical Practice in Sri Lanka**

Traditionally, Ayurvedic doctors in Sri Lanka are called Vederalas. Until the early 20th century, a Vederala’s kit (displayed in the center left-hand corner) was typically composed of a stylus for writing prescriptions, a knife and a smoothing stamp. Vederalas would also carry medication and/or the raw ingredients for making medications in metal, ivory and wood containers, such as the ones below. Metal boxes were used to keep ingredients dry, ivory boxes were used to contain oily substances, and wood boxes were for dry pills. Most Ayurvedic remedies were prepared by the Vederala on demand, based on patients’ requirements. Ayurvedic medicine has two main types of treatment: medicine that strengthens a person, and medicine that removes disease.

At the bottom of the display case are examples of Ayurvedic recipes and ingredients that would be used to treat eye diseases. As you can see, natural ingredients like plants and minerals constitute the main ingredients of all Ayurvedic medication. Kana, the ‘Demon of Blindness’, was believed to cause blindness and eye diseases and intervenes in the ceremonies through a mask, such as the one on display here, with closed or diseased eyes, a symbolic representation of its role. Below is a photograph taken by Casey A. Woods, circa 1920s that shows an exorcist wearing his costume. All the material in this display case was collected by Casey Wood, himself an ophthalmologist who spent many months in Sri Lanka collecting and studying local traditions relating to the cure of visual impairment.

**A Social History of Chinese Slippers**

The practice of footbinding was common in China from the 10th century up until the late 19th/early 20th centuryamong women in higher socioeconomic classes. The act of binding the feet restricted a woman’s movement and limited her mobility as she could only take small steps. Only women who were not required to work in the fields could afford to practice footbinding. However, these women were extremely productive in other ways and often became highly skilled seamstresses and embroiderers. The delicacy of the small shoes adapted to the bound foot reflects both the status of the women who wore them and the skills required to make them. The Redpath Museum has many examples of the beautiful, intricately embroidered and bright coloured shoes worn by women with bound feet (see the left-hand side of the display case).

The process of footbinding would normally begin when a girl was between 5 to 8 years old. The girl’s toes would be curled back and tightly bound and the wrappings tightened regularly; this would ensure that the toes were as close to the heel as possible and constrain growth. The painful process took several years. The ideal foot was 3 inches in length and was called the “Golden Lotus” because of the foot’s resemblance to a lotus flower. The 3 inch foot embodied both beauty and eroticism, but few saw the naked foot: the emphasis was on the delicacy of the tip of the shoe pointing out from under long robes.

Because the bound foot set the ideal standard of beauty for a woman’s foot and was associated with wealth, other women would find ways to mimic the look and sound of bound feet. For example, the shoes in the middle of this display case are for a normal size foot, yet have a podium step at the base of the shoe; this had the effect of “sounding” like a shoe for a bound foot. The Manchu (or Qing) Dynasty (mid-17th/-early 20th century) integrated many aspects of Chinese culture when it established its rule over most of China; these shoes might have been worn by a Manchu woman whose feet had not been bound but who belonged to the ruling class and thus wished to follow the established fashion.

There are several reasons why footbinding ended in the late 19th/early 20th century. Missionaries advocating for the rights of Chinese women held campaigns that were very effective in dissuading some families from binding the feet of their daughters. This coincided with a rise in the influence of Western ideas and early feminism in particular. More crucially, the introduction of industrialized textile plants into China reduced the role of women working from home while also increasing the demand for women in the labour force outside the home. As a cultural practice, footbinding was associated with the aesthetics and social hierarchy of imperial China and, although it survived briefly in more remote regions, it was made illegal in 1902 as an element of early social-political revolution in China.

**Amida Nyorai (Japanese Buddha)**

This statue of Buddha is called *Amida Nyorai* as it depicts the Buddha after he has reached enlightenment. *Amida Nyorai* is characterized by elongated earlobes, a curled coiffure with a topknot, an inlaid forehead gem at the third eye, a lotus hand gesture and a full-lotus cross legged seated position. Buddha statues are common in Buddhist temples throughout India, China and Japan where worshippers pray and place offerings in front of them. Buddha statues are not perceived as lifeless representations, but actual manifestations of Buddha himself.

Buddhism was introduced from China to Japan in the 6th century and the cult of *Amida Nyorai*, or the enlightened Buddha, developed more particularly in the 8th and 9th century during the Heian period.*Amida Nyorai* became a common object of worship during the Kamakura Period (1185-1333) when Pure Land Buddhism gained widespread popularity. Pure Land Buddhists believe that nirvana, or the ultimate state of enlightenment, can be attained only through the worshipping of the enlightened Buddha, *Amida Nyorai.*The end of the 19th and early 20th centuries there were dwindling numbers of worshippers, many Buddhist temples resorted to the sale of their objects for survival. This coincided with a fashion for all things Japanese in the West and explains, in part, the presence of so many Japanese Buddhist statues in North American and European museums.

**Samurai Armour**

The *samurai* were an elite warrior class of feudal Japan who became the dominant military power during the 12th to mid-19th centuries. Their style of armour had its origins in the lamellar armour of the 7th and 8th centuries, made up of numerous rectangular scales, and worn as a large coat. During the relatively peaceful Edo Period (1600-1868), the role of the *samurai* became more prominent in ceremonial events and less important in warfare. Consequently, the armor evolved into a more decorative form, where style was favoured over function. Suits of armour included twenty or more pieces and strict protocols on how to put it on were secret knowledge held by the warriors alone. Despite conformities in dress code, armour was personalized by every individual warrior with the addition of the crest of their military lord and family on the front plate.

This *samurai* armour displayed probably dates from the last century of the Edo Period; it is elaborately detailed and decorative, as was typical of the time. Several features of this armour are intended to make its wearer feared by his rivals. The moustache on the face-plate, made from animal hair, was deliberately designed to frighten as was the red-painted upper lip.

**Early Dentistry and a Chinese Dental Banner**

Dentistry and tooth extraction were common medical specialties around the world, yet their methods and associated medications varied considerably. In Japan, tooth extraction was a very common procedure, and it is estimated that between the 17th and 19th centuries, as many as 5,000 practitioners were employed at any given time. These specialists often used herbal medicine to reduce pain associated with tooth extraction; a representation of a Japanese tooth extractor is shown on the right. In contrast, anaesthesias were generally not used by Chinese dentists prior to the 19th century.

In China, dentists conducted their practice in crowded public markets. Shouting, music and theatrics were employed to engage the audience as the dentist would extract teeth from a patient’s mouth. Since no type of medication was given to dull the pain, these public displays served not only to entertain, but also to drown out the sound of the patient’s cries. On the right, a photograph shows a similar public performance by a dentist in Paris circa 1900. If you were to walk through China’s market places and alleyways in the 19th and early 20th centuries, you would probably have seen banners of hanging teeth similar to the one displayed here. This was a typical advertisement for dentists, and the more teeth that were hanging in front of their stalls on the streets, the more tooth extractions they had performed.

**Betel and Kava**

Betel and kava are two mildly psychoactive substances made from local plants that figure prominently in the social lives of Islanders in different regions of Oceania. Both substances have their origins in Pacific prehistory with distinct areas of use and involve differing levels of ceremony in their preparation and ingestion. Betel, seen here on the left hand side, is used predominantly in New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and westernmost Micronesia. It is prepared by mixing the nuts from Areca palm, which has mildly stimulating properties similar to those of nicotine, with lime from ground seashells or coral using a spatula, like the one seen here. It is usually consumed individually, and is often taken on a daily basis in a relatively informal setting.

Kava is a much more formalized and communally used substance, consumed by people from Vanuatu eastwards. Kava is prepared as a beverage from the roots of the pepper plant *Piper methysticum* mixed with cold water. These two ingredients are carefully strained and poured into coconut shell cups, producing a bitter tasting yet relaxing drink. In most Pacific societies, kava has traditionally been consumed by groups of adult males as part of ritual ceremonies, to commune with spirits, to honor guests to one’s house, to celebrate major life events or even for more informal recreational social events. The recreational use of kava has more recently been expanded to include visiting tourists and women.

**An Observer Observed: Fieldwork in the East Highlands of New Guinea**

Richard Salisbury was a prominent anthropologist who founded McGill’s Anthropology Department in 1966 and taught at McGill until 1989. These two display cases use objects and images relating to Salisbury’s research in Papua New Guinea to examine the practice of anthropological fieldwork, which is based on interviewing local people, participant observation and empirical analysis of customs and traditions. Salisbury looked at the influence of technological innovations on social and economic life among the Siane of the Eastern Highlands in Papua New Guinea in the early 1950s and 60s. He chose the Siane as they were very isolated from western influence, having only made direct contact with Europeans in the mid 1940s.

Salisbury noted that European influence did not alter economic relations between men and women: men still controlled all “skilled” work that involved axes, while women were said to do “unskilled” work, i.e. work that did not require axes. Women were often engaged in making net bags like the ones seen here, each one taking the average women 3 days to create. These net bags were used to carry goods, infants, and like the axes, could be used for personal adornment. Salisbury noted a final major influence of European contact in regards to currency items. Prior to European contact, the Siane used local shells, stone axes and Bird of Paradise feathers for exchange or to pay brideprice. Between 1948 and 1952, European coins were rare and considered luxury items, owned by a few high status individuals. Paper bills were initially prized for their colour, and used to decorate bridewealth banners, but eventually along with coins replaced traditional exchange items.

**An Observer Observed: Fieldwork in New Britain (Papua New Guinea)**

This display presents Salisbury’s 1961 fieldwork amongst the Tolai of Vunamami in East New Britain, Papua New Guinea. Compared to the Siane, the Tolai had a long history of European contact and influence. One major feature of Tolai society was the use of *tabu*, or *nassa calossa*shells, as items of monetary and ceremonial value. *Tabu* shells were coiled into large wheels, or *palumtabu*, as seen in the images to the left. These large wheels held one fathom of coiled *tabu* (equivalent to approximately 183 centimetres) and would be kept intact and opened only upon the death of their owner or their owner’s parents. Everyone in attendance at the funeral ceremony would be given an amount of *tabu* in accordance to their social status.

During his stay in Vunamami, Salisbury not only studied the Tolai use of *tabu* as a political, economic and social status tool, but he also took an active part in Tolai ceremonies, as did his wife Mary. Photographs displayed show Salisbury at the raising of *tubuan*Toginila and Mary participating in the*matamatam,*or clan ancestral ceremonies dance. This active engagement with the local community along with intensive recording of daily events represented by the field notebooks are examples of field-based activities that contribute to the anthropologist’s understanding of cultural traditions.

**Women’s Dress and Colonialism in the Pacific Islands**

Prior to European contact, women throughout the Pacific Islands fashioned garments from leaves and the pounded inner bark of certain types of local trees. These raw materials and the mats and garments made from them were valued as objects of exchange and served as a source of prestige and wealth for their owners. With the arrival of European missionaries during the 19th century came the introduction of Christian ideas about modesty and the use of manufactured cloth. Introduced cloth and clothing became increasingly popular in many areas, occasionally complimenting traditional garments and sometimes replacing them completely. The “Mother Hubbard” style dress that was made of cotton cloth and hid the feminine attributes of its wearer became a familiar article of clothing for many women in the islands of the Pacific. In Vanuatu, it was considered the national dress.

This exhibit considers both traditional and European-influenced dress on Erromango, one of the islands in southern Vanuatu. The leaf skirts and barkcloth displayed here date from the 1890s. If a woman’s husband died, she would ceremonially cut her *numplat*after she completed her period of mourning. As of the 1940s, the*numplat*lost popularity, in part because of the influence of European customs and dress. Cotton “Mother Hubbards” are now the standard form of dress for adult women on Vanuatu; the example displayed here was made in the mid 1990s.

**Jivaro *Tsantsa*and the Tourist Trade**

Is it real *tsantsa,*or is it fake? Is it a human or a monkey head? (DNA says monkey)

The cultural practice of making shrunken heads, or *tsantsas,* is based on past spiritual beliefs held by the Shuar of Ecuador and Peru. The Shuar have been historically referred to as the Jivaro by outsiders, a term used broadly to describe several neighbouring groups and which holds negative connotations of savagery. Since the *tsantsa*on display has not been identified as belonging to one specific group, the term “Jivaro” is used to indicate a broad cultural area. The process of shrinking heads, therefore, was done to “capture” the avenging soul. Once a warrior had been killed, the victorious warrior would remove the head from the body and bring it back to his home territory. There he would remove the skull, sew the head back together and then boil the head in water. Boiling the head would reduce it to approximately a third of its original size. The head would be singed over fire and would turn black as a result. Polishing the head with ash was a final ritual. This process was said to ensure that the avenging soul could not escape and therefore could not enact vengeance on its killer.

In the late 19th century, these “shrunken heads” became popular amongst Victorian collectors as objects of curiosity. The increased demand for shrunken heads, along with the collectors’ willingness to pay for them, motivated people to make shrunken heads for sale. While *tsantsa* were made from slain warriors, “made for sale” versions were produced by taking heads from bodies in graveyards or using monkey heads, which once treated, closely resembled human heads. In some cases, traditional preparation techniques were used to create these curios, in spite of their non-traditional sources.

**Pottery and the Human Body**

This display depicts a variety of functional and decorative ceramics from northern Colombia, one of the earliest ceramic producing areas of the Americas. The individual pieces have been selected to show how pottery vessels are often created to imitate aspects of the human body. The connection between the forms and decorative aspects of ceramic and human bodies is not only visual but is also present in the common language used to describe the “body”, “neck”, and “legs” of ceramic works. Several of the vessels exhibited have anthropomorphic features such as faces, arms, legs and feet. Others also reproduce typical body decorations such as designs used for body painting, tattoos, and jewellery.

**Teotihuacán**

These miniature terracotta figurine fragments are from Teotihuacán, a city in central Mexico that was occupied from the first century up until its mysterious collapse in 650 CE. The figuring fragments in the exhibition are not from scientifically excavated sites, but were randomly collected and donated to the Museum during the last century and are therefore without any contextual information. The earliest (shown at the bottom of the display case) appear to be handmade; over time moulds were used to create these figurines, as seen at the top of the display case. Despite the use of moulds in the production of the later Teotihuacán figurines, they continued to show distinct differences. For example, there are differences in types of headdresses, ear shape and the overall size of the figurines. The animal heads were likely to have been associated with various gods, suggesting a widespread spiritual belief and a common religious practice based on the abundance of animal terracotta heads. Overall, millions of Teotihuacán figurines have been found.

**African Hairstyles**

A sampling of varied hairstyles and their meanings is presented in this exhibit with images of Nigerian women taken in the 1970s. The case also presents a variety of early 20th century ornaments used to decorate and style hair from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Several artefacts that show typical coiffures indicating status or local styles are also displayed.

How one styles one’s hair is a personal decision, and yet most people tend to cut and style their hair according to their culture’s social trends. Note the two hairdresser signs from West Africa depicting the latest fashionable hairdos in the upper right-hand corner of this display case. These signs are not merely a form of advertisement, but also a cultural symbol of what is normal and expected of hairstyles in this culture. Though your average Montrealer may find it difficult to imagine their hair being sculpted into a three-dimensional conical form, this is because we are not used to seeing this type of hairdo here. Yet what we find normal and trendy here may appear strange and unusual for other people around the world.

**African Currency**

Throughout history, humankind has used different objects to measure value and represent exchange. In Africa, shells, cloth, metal, weapons, tools and ornaments have all been used as a type of locally agreed upon currency. These currencies have been used for social obligations, such as paying brideprice or fines, as well as economic trades in lieu of bartering.

This display case shows several different items that were used as currency in the past century; some of them still retain monetary value today. Most of these examples are from the Democratic Republic of Congo. On your left you will notice an elongated metal blade, or Liganda, circa 1904. The Liganda was used in exchange for canoes or to pay brideprice by the local population during the early decades of the last century. They could be up to 60 inches long, and weigh as much as 4 and a half pounds; the larger the Liganda, the greater its monetary value.

**African Ironworking**

Ironworking is an old tradition throughout sub-Saharan Africa, dating back to roughly 2,500-3,000 BCE. African iron smelting was a specialized trade constricted to a particular caste of society and was considered a part-time specialty. Only males could be iron smelters, and the secret knowledge of the trade was passed down through paternal hereditary lines, from father to son.

By the 1800s, African iron smelting decreased dramatically, due to the influx of cheaper European iron technology. Some historians argue that the initial introduction of cheap European iron technologies did not destroy the local African trade of ironworking, but merely transformed the African blacksmiths’ role into that of repairmen. As the quality of European iron tools improved, African ironworkers part-time specialty slowly died out. Since the 1980s, there has been a revival of the traditional craft of ironworking throughout Africa.

**African Music**

Musical instruments have been used for communication, in celebrations and in rituals throughout the African continent for thousands of years. Many of the musical instruments displayed here are over 100 years old, although most of these types of instruments are still played today. Traditional African music is usually not categorized as a personalized form of art, but rather holds a functional purpose. Music will be composed in a way such that the rhythm and tempo reflect the mood of the ceremonial activity taking place. For example, in funeral music the crying and wailing of those in attendance is a natural addition to the mournful melodies being played.

There are a variety of drums displayed here using different animal or reptile skins as membranes. The whistles and flutes displayed were commonly used among hunters to alert each other of their position without scaring away animals, or to imitate bird calls in order to attract them. The zither presented below has bamboo strings, though contemporary zithers often use plastic or metal strings that resemble guitar strings. To the zither’s right are other examples of chordophones, such as the fiddle, bow harps, and lutes. While all chordophones require plucking or bowing to create a sound, some are more complex than others.

**Power Figures (*Nkisi)* from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

These figures, known as *nkisi,*represented great power for their owners: they could be used to destroy enemies or protect against sickness. Associated with groups living in Angola and the D.R. Congo, *nkisi* figures were bought and kept by individuals or entire communities for their protective powers. Based on the size of these three examples, it is likely that they were used by individuals, as community figures were known to be quite large, some measuring up to a meter in height. The figures were not exclusive to a particular segment of society; however, it is believed that only those in need of revenge or protection would invest in one. The left-hand and center figures are Kongo*nkisi* from the Congo River area, circa 1860. The right-hand one is Songye from the southwest D.R. Congo, circa 1905. Copper and brass bandings on Songye figures were often used to convey the power and wealth of their owners.

The wooden figures do not in themselves hold mystical protective powers. They were sold “unfinished”; individuals who wished to use them for revenge or protection would have had to seek a medical or spiritual advisor, or *nganga*, to fill the *nkisi* with a cocktail of ingredients. Ingredients might include nails, knives, charms and animal, vegetable and mineral substances, carefully selected to imbue the wooden figure with a specific type of power depending on the individual’s needs. Some accounts claim that “relics of the dead” would also be added to the composite of ingredients. These special ingredients were secretly inserted into the abdominal cavity or the head of the figures, two areas associated with the reincarnated spirit or eternal soul of individuals. Sometimes the *nganga,*or spiritual specialist, would be involved in the final carving of a figure, making it difficult to determine if a *nkisi* had been carved by two individuals or just one.