

The Pacific

700–1980 ce

Cindy



213. Nan Madol

MICRONESIA. c. 700-1600, basalt boulders and prismatic columns, Pohnpeii, Micronesias

- ✦ Built out into the water on a **lagoon**; similar to **Venice**, Italy
- ✦ Ninety-two small **artificial islands** connected by canals, about 170 acres in total
- ✦ Canals were flushed **clean** with the tides
- ✦ Seawalls fifteen feet high and thirty-five feet thick acted as **breakwaters**
- ✦ Walls were made of prismatic basalt
- ✦ Curved outer walls **point upward** at **edges**, giving the complex a symbolic **boat-like** appearance
- ✦ Islands were arranged southwest to **northeast** to take advantage of the **trade winds**
- ✦ Ancient city that acted as the capital of the Saudeleur Dynasty of Micronesia
- ✦ City built to separate the upper classes from the lower classes
- ✦ King arranged for the **upper classes** to live **close** to him, to keep an **eye** on them



217. Female deity

MICRONESIA. c. eighteenth to nineteenth century, wood, Nukuoro, Micronesia

- ✦ **Simple geometric** form
- ✦ Erect pose, long arms, broad chest
- ✦ Chin drawing to a point; **no** facial features
- ✦ Horizontal lines used to indicate kneecaps, navel, waistline
- ✦ **Female deity**
- ✦ Represent **individual deities**
- ✦ Sometimes **dressed** in garments; may have been **decorated** with flowers
- ✦ Many kept in **religious buildings** belonging to the community



214. Moai on platform (ahu)

EASTER ISLAND (RAPA NUI), c 1100-1600, volcanic tuff figures on basalt base, Easter Island (Rapa Nui)

- ✦ Prominent **foreheads**, large broad **noses**, thin pouting lips, ears that reach to the top of their heads
- ✦ White coral placed in eyes to “**open**” them
- ✦ **Topknots** added to some statues
- ✦ Backs **tattooed**
- ✦ **Breasts** and **navels** delineated
- ✦ Short, thin arms fall **straight** down; hands on hips; hands across lower abdomen below navel
- ✦ Images represent **personalities deified** after death or **commemorated** as the first settler-kings
- ✦ Erected on large platforms of **stone** mixed with **ashes** from **cremations**, the platforms are **as sacred** as the statues on them
- ✦ About **nine hundred statues** in all, fifty tons apiece, **mostly male**; almost all **facing inland**



215. Ahu ula(feather cape)

HAWAII. late eighteenth century, feathers and fiber, Museum of the Americas, Madrid

- ✦ Cape made of thousands of **bird feathers**; worn by **men**
- ✦ Feathers numbered 500,000; some birds had only seven usable feathers
- ✦ The feathers were tied to a **coconut** fiber base
- ✦ Only **high-ranking chiefs** or **warriors** of great ability were entitled to wear these garments
- ✦ **Red** considered a **royal** colour in **Polynesia**; **yellow** was prized because of its **rarity**
- ✦ Cape created by artists who **chanted** the wearer's **ancestors** to **imbue** their **power** onto it
- ✦ **Protected** the wearer from harm
- ✦ Concept of “mana”: a **supernatural** force believed to dwell in a person or sacred object

216. Staff god

COOK ISLANDS Rarotonga, Cook Islands, late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, wood, tapa, fiber, and feathers, British museum, London

- ✦ Large head placed on top, several smaller heads carved below it
- ✦ Large column-like **wooden** core held upright in village **common spaces**
- ✦ Shaft in the form of an **elongated body**
- ✦ Central carved wooden shaft, around which a roll of tapa is placed
- ✦ The **soul** of the god is represented by **polished pearl shells** and **red feathers**, which are placed inside the bark cloth next to the interior shaft
- ✦ Most staff gods were **destroyed**; only the top ends were retained as **trophies**
- ✦ In contextual image from a book by an English missionary (not shown), the staff gods have been thrown down in the village square in front of a European-style church; represents the **fall of one faith** and the **adoption of another**
- ✦ **Contextual image** is the only visual evidence that indicates how these staff gods were used





218. Buk (mask)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA. Torres Strait, mid-to-late nineteenth century, turtle shell, wood, fiber, feathers, and shell, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

- ✦ **Turtle** shell masks are **unique** to this region
- ✦ Some masks **combine human** and **animal** forms: this mask shows a bird placed on top
- ✦ The mask, like a helmet, is worn over the head
- ✦ Used with **grass costumes** in **ceremonies** about death, fertility, or **male initiation**, perhaps even to ensure a good harvest
- ✦ Ceremonies involved **fire**, **drum** beats, and **chanting**; recreating mythical **ancestral** beings and their impact on these people in everyday activities



222. Malagan mask

PAPUA NE GUNIEA. c. twentieth century, wood, pigment, fiber, and shel, Brookyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

- ✦ Masks are extremely **intricate** in their **carving**
- ✦ Artists are specialists in using **negative space**
- ✦ Painted black, yellow, and red: important colours denoting **violence, war, and magic**
- ✦ **Large hair comb** reflects a hairstyle of the **time**; masks are not physical portraits, only portraits of the **soul**
- ✦ Mask indicates the relationship of a particular **deceased** person to a **clan** and to **living** members of the family
- ✦ Malagan ceremonies send the souls of the deceased on their way to the **otherworld**
- ✦ Ceremonies **free** the living from the **obligation** of serving the dead
- ✦ Sometimes ceremonies begin **months after** death and **last** an extended period of time
- ✦ Erect structures suited to the **purpose**; after the ceremony the structures are considered **useless** and usually **destroyed** or allowed to rot



219. Hiapo (tapa) from Niue

POLYNESIA. c 1850-1900, tapa or bark cloth, freehand painting, Auckland War Memorial Museum, New Zealand

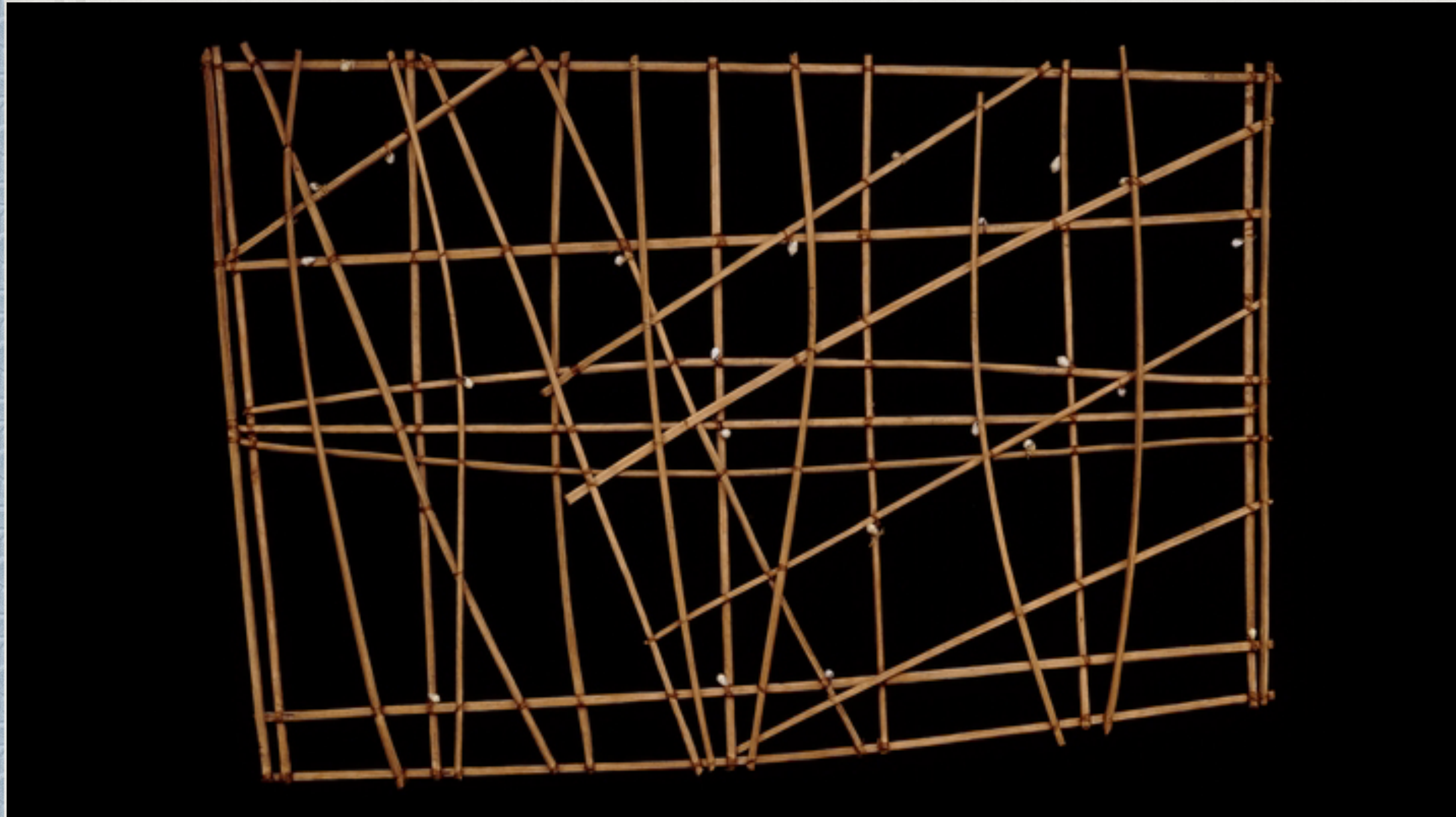
- ✦ **Hiapo** is the word used in Niue for tapa (bark cloth)
- ✦ Tapa is cloth made from **tree bark**; the pieces are **beaten** and **pasted** together
- ✦ Using **stencils**, the artists dye the exposed parts of the tapa with **paint**
- ✦ After the tapa is dry, designs are sometimes **repainted** to enhance the effect
- ✦ Traditionally worn as clothing before the importation of **cotton**
- ✦ Generally made by **women**
- ✦ Tapa takes on a special meaning: **commemorating** an event, honouring a **chief**, noting a series of **ancestors**
- ✦ Each set of designs is meant to be **interpreted symbolically**; many of the images have a **rich history**



220. Tamati Waka Nene

NEW ZEALAND, Gottfried Lindauer, 1890, oil on canvas, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (Figure 28.7)

- ✦ **Ceremonial weapon** has a finely **wrought** blade with dangling feathers and abalone shell as a focal point or eye
- ✦ Emphasis placed on symbols of **rank**: elaborate **tattooing** with **Maori** designs, **staff** with an **eye** in the center, feathers dangling from the staff
- ✦ tatus revealed in oversize **greenstone** earring, which contains his power or “**mana**,” and kiwi feather **cloak**
- ✦ Subject is Tamati Waka Nene (C. 1780-1871), Maori **chief** and convert to the **Wesleyan** faith
- ✦ Painting is **posthumous**, based on a **photograph** by John Crombie
- ✦ Painter born in Bohemia; famous for portraits of Maori chieftains from his arrival in New Zealand in 1873-1874 until his death in 1926
- ✦ **Journeyman** painter and **tradesman** who worked on commission
- ✦ **European-style** painting in its use of oil paint, canvas backing, colouring, modelling, shading, and atmospheric perspective



221. Navigation chart

MICRONESIA. Marshall Islands, nineteenth to early twentieth century, wood and fiber

- ✦ Chart is made of **wood**, therefore **waterproof** and **buoyant**
- ✦ Horizontal and vertical sticks support the chart
- ✦ Diagonal lines indicate **wind** and **water** currents
- ✦ Small shells indicate the **position** of the islands on the chart
- ✦ Marshall Islands are **low lying** and hard to see from a distance or from sea level
- ✦ Charts enabled passage through the many islands to get to a destination
- ✦ Charts meant to be **memorised prior** to a **voyage**; not necessarily used during a voyage
- ✦ Charts called **wapepe** in the Marshall Islands



223. Presentation of Fijian mats and tapa cloths to Queen Elizabeth II FIJI. during the 1953-1954 royal tour, 1953, multimedia performance, photographic documentation.

- ✦ Enormous tapa cloth made for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 to Fiji on the occasion of her **coronation** as queen of England
- ✦ Imagery of royal **crowns**, **geometric** patterns, and a **floral motif**
- ✦ Cf. Lapita geometric motifs
- ✦ **Men** oversee the growth of the mulberry trees that produce the tapa; **women** turn the bark into cloth
- ✦ Bark removed from tree, soaked in water, and treated to make it **pliable**
- ✦ Clubs are used to **beat** the strips into a long rectangular block to form pieces of cloth
- ✦ The edges of these smaller pieces are then glued or **felted** together to produce large sheets
- ✦ Decorated according to a **local tradition**; sometimes stencilled, sometimes printed or dyed
- ✦ Presentation to the queen is an example of **performance art**