

Memory – Moments of remembering and forgetting

Which moments become imprinted in our memory? What do we dismiss? How do we commemorate and pass on events that are relevant to society?

The exhibition provides insight into the diversity of collective memory: forms and practices of how families, groups, and societies invent and envision their past.

Collective memory – Remembering and forgetting are two mutually dependent sides of memory. Shared experiences and memories are fundamental to the self-conception of people and groups. However, references to the past are never static, on the contrary, they are continually being negotiated and appropriated. Collective memory is composed of different, often contradictory positions and perspectives which impact on how and in which form certain events are memorized and visualized, or withheld and denied.

Remembering and forgetting with things – Objects, images, and texts both bear and endorse memories. Across the world, significant moments from birth to death, the influence of ancestors and forebears, as well as narratives of creation and disruption are chiselled in stone, carved in wood, cast in metal, or printed on paper. Humans communicate and revise experiences and knowledge with the aid of rituals and practices. When these lose their cogency, the narrative thread is severed. The ruptures between past and present also become manifest in things. Ruins, relics, and remains from foregone days embody fragments of a lost or forgotten way of life.

Memory space – Museums are not merely keepers of the past. They also help to construct and communicate memories. The exhibition offers room for reflection on the role and meaning of the past for shaping the present and future, thus prompting us to review our experiences and memories.

1 Souvenirs and keepsakes

Things and images both convey and trigger memories. We rely on them to bring to mind significant relationships and moments or episodes of our life.

Whether made by hand, manufactured industrially, or printed on paper, it is only in combination with personal experience that souvenirs and keepsakes unfold their emotional impact and become something special. Looking at them brings back memories.

In order for them to retain their recollective power, the memories associated with specific keepsakes need to be continuously revised and communicated. Museums may well serve as keepers of things and thus grant them a second life as representatives of the past. But the emotions, memories and stories associated with them, which could, in theory, restore their singularity, were usually never documented.

Baptism mementos

In the mid 19th century, new forms of baptism mementos became fashionable: the <baptism coin>, the godparents' money gift, was no longer folded into the baptism letter but placed in a

small, decorated box. They were designed as dummy books and usually contained, next to a lush décor, also a verse sheet with a dedication.

- 1 Little box with baptism letter and envelope for the <baptism coin>; Zurich, Switzerland; 1889; cardboard, paper, textile, plastic; Swiss National Museum, donated 1980, VI 52765
- 2-4 Three little boxes with baptism letter and envelope for the <baptism coin>; Glarus, Switzerland; 1894; cardboard, paper, textile, wax, plastic; collected by Frieda Lindroos, purchased 1971, VI 39731.10-12
- 5 Little box with baptism letter and envelope for the <baptism coin>; Basel, Switzerland; 1894; cardboard, paper; collected by Katharina Grossmann, donated 1987, VI 61153a-c
- 6 Little box with baptism letter and envelope for the <baptism coin>; Basel, Switzerland; 1898; cardboard, paper, textile, plastic; collected by W. Keller, donated 1962, VI 28570

Baptism letters

In the Protestant areas of Europe, it became fashionable from the 17th century onward for godparents to give their baptized godchild a letter of baptism – usually together with a gift of money which was wrapped in the paper. The letter containing epigraphs and good wishes not only served as proof of the child’s baptism but also as a reminder to adhere to Christian principles and virtues throughout life. These letters were often framed and displayed at home as a reminder.

- 7 Baptism letter with paper cut; Altweiler, Alsace, France; 1783; paper, glass, wood; Evangelisch-reformierter Kirchenrat Basel-Stadt, donated 1961, VI 27880
- 8 Baptism letter with paper cut; Altweiler, Alsace, France; 1782; paper, glass, wood; Evangelisch-reformierter Kirchenrat Basel-Stadt, donated 1961, VI 27879
- 9 Baptism letter with image of Jesu’s christening; Reigoldswil, Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland; 1798; paper, glass, wood; collected by E. R. Seiler, donated 1913, VI 5630
- 10 Foldable baptism letter; Switzerland; 1806; paper, glass, wood; Evangelisch-reformierter Kirchenrat Basel-Stadt, donated 1961, VI 27900
- 11 Baptism letter; Mettmenstetten, Zurich, Switzerland; 1839; paper; collected by Alfred La Roche, donated 1907, VI 2131
- 12 Foldable baptism letter; Melchnau, Bern, Switzerland; 1847; paper; collected by Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, donated 1917, VI 7909

Pictures as souvenirs

Photo albums first emerged in the 1850s. They provided an opportunity to arrange and safely store images. Until the end of the 19th century, almost all family photographs and portraits were taken by professional photographers. Thanks to technical innovations and the availability of cameras to ever-growing segments of the population, photo albums became a popular medium for capturing moments of family and friendship as well as recording travels and festive events. Early slip-in albums were expensive. Their hardback pages had normed compartments into which the prints affixed to small cards were slipped. With the rise of amateur photography in the early 20th century, the range of subjects and album type became more varied. Travels albums documenting stays abroad soon became particularly popular.

Until today, photo albums play a key role in recording memories. Because of their supposedly one-to-one rendition of reality, photographs are regarded as precise memory media and tend to coin our visual memory, accordingly. Furnished with the names of the persons depicted, maybe even with a short documentation, photo albums offer insight into the lives of the people portrayed. Without accompanying details that embed the images in living memory, photographs assume the role of general contemporary witnesses.

- 13 Family photographs of the Braun family; Wiesbaden, Hesse, Germany; 1877; paper, leather, cardboard; collected by Else Steinböhmer-Felix, donated 1982, VI 56285
- 14 Photo album <holiday pictures>; Basel, Switzerland; 1926-1927; paper, cardboard, leather; Hedi Keller, donated from bequest 1998, VI 68996.01
- 15 Photo album with calling cards of crowned heads; Basel, Switzerland; around 1900; metal, leather, photos; collected by Christine Burckhardt-Seebass, donated 1989, VI 63610
- 16 Photo album <ski holidays in Akakura, Japan>; Basel, Switzerland; 1929; paper, cardboard, leather; Hedi Keller, donated from bequest 1998, VI 68997.03

Wedding memento

Marriage or the official registration of a partnership is often celebrated in a special rite de passage. Items such as bridal finery and photographs are kept in remembrance. Many couples celebrate their wedding day each year, with special emphasis given to silver, golden, diamond, or iron wedding anniversaries, that is, 25, 50, 60, and 65 years marriage. Often these anniversaries are celebrated festively, in turn, producing new mementos. In contrast, divorce is rarely celebrated and there are no material mementos.

- 17 Collected documents in memory of the wedding of Martha Rothhardt and Ernst Wilcke in 1908, their silver wedding anniversary in 1933, and their golden anniversary in 1958; Germany; 1907-1958; cardboard, paper; collected by Paul Hugger, purchased 1980, VI 55765

Wedding photographs from Bamako, Mali

«*Le Dimanche à Bamako c'est le jour de mariage*» are the words sung by the Malian duo Amadou and Mariam. Every Sunday, innumerable weddings are staged in the streets of Bamako. Two professional groups are always present on such occasions: the guardians of tradition and family genealogies (Bamankan *jeliw*), and the photographers. While the *jeliw* symbolically unite the couple with their ancestors by voicing genealogical songs, the photographers capture the joyful event with family and friends for the future. The pictures are later handed to the couple in form of an album to remind them of what is probably one of the most important days in their life. They show the couple in the company of different significant others and reference groups, thus indicating the complex social network which the newly wedded couple is about to join as a new social unit.

- 18 Photographs of the wedding of Zoumana Sidibe and Aïssata Sangare © Issa Sanogo and Hamdia Traore, December 2019, Bamako, Mali

Pietro Grisoni: remembering Brazil

Pietro Grisoni left photo albums documenting his travels and work in Brazil between 1937 and 1939. There he worked at a station of the Salesian missionaries. The photographs helped him to recall his experiences and tell his grandchildren about his adventures, 55 years later. He kept precise records. The album was probably rearranged later by his children. In 2005, the Museum der Kulturen Basel purchased the album together with his audio recordings and a collection of ethnographic objects. The records offer an unusually personal insight into how Pietro Grisoni recalls his days in Brazil during a time of fundamental change.

- 19 Extracts from photo album and recordings <Memories of Brazil 1937-39, Experiences among Bororos, Carajas, Chaventes, etc. Indians>, Pietro Grisoni; Brazil and Switzerland; 21:38 mins., R. Grisoni-Russi, purchased 2005, (F)IVc 7239

Vergissmeinnicht (Forget-me-not)

This miniature booklet offers a bible verse or a proverb for each day of the year and leaves a little space for jotting down birthdays or saint's days. The booklet serves as a daily reminder of Christian virtues and helps us to not forget the birthdays of people close to us. The dedications indicate that, in the early 20th century, these booklets were often given as Christmas or birthday presents.

- 20 Christian forget-me-not; Constance, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; around 1920; paper, cardboard; collected by Charlotte Seifert-Alioth, donated 1988, VI 62515
- 21 Christian forget-me-not; Constance, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; 1910; paper, cardboard; collected by Katharina Grossmann, donated 1987, VI 61332
- 22 Christian forget-me-not; Reutlingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; 1892; paper, cardboard; collected by Theo Gantner, purchased 1986, VI 60825
- 23 Christian forget-me-not; Glarus, Switzerland; around 1930; paper, cardboard; collected by Theo Gantner, donated 1992, VI 65796
- 24 Christian forget-me-not; Reutlingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; around 1910; paper, cardboard; collected by A. Scheidegger, donated 1981, VI 54038

Confirmation and First Communion mementos

In the Protestant Church, baptized adolescents are accepted into the Christian community as full members upon Confirmation. In the Catholic Church, the corresponding step is the First Communion. Both events are celebrated ritually. Up to this day, certificates serve as mementos of this important step in a person's religious life. In 19th century Switzerland, commemorative sheets containing the godparents' best wishes were often framed and displayed at home.

- 25 Confirmation memento; Neunkirch, Schaffhausen, Switzerland; 1840; paper, glass, wood; Evangelisch-reformierter Kirchenrat Basel-Stadt, donated 1961, VI 27896
- 26 Confirmation memento; Neunkirch, Schaffhausen, Switzerland; 1860; paper, glass, wood; Evangelisch-reformierter Kirchenrat Basel-Stadt, donated 1961, VI 27894
- 27 Confirmation memento; Oberschan, St. Gallen, Switzerland; 1880; paper, glass, wood; collected by Emma Müller-Klöti, purchased 1967, VI 35243
- 28 First Communion memento; French speaking part of Switzerland; printed in Paris, France; 1892-1905; paper, glass, wood; collected by Sibylle Kummer, purchased 1981, VI 53236
- 29 Confirmation memento; Basel, Switzerland; 1906; paper, glass, wood; collected by Sibylle Schamböck, purchased 1971, VI 39340

Tokens of friendship

Friendship gifts remind us of the trust and affection bestowed on us by family and friends. Dedications and best wishes recall the good times spent together. Verses and proverbs included in autograph books often quote worldly wisdoms or anticipate farewells and partings. The physical separation shall not sever the inner bond, and with the promises never to forget one another.

In the 19th century and up to the 1920s, autograph books were popular among young women, in particular. Later, they were preferentially used by young girls, especially among school friends. The predecessors of autograph books date back to the 16th century in the form of <family books> which were kept by men; in the 18th century, these were replaced by <friendship notes>.

- 30 Friendship memento; La Neuveville, Bern, Switzerland; around 1850; cardboard, paper; collected by B. Schachenmann, donated 1952, VI 19761
- 31 Autograph book of Jean-Jacques Duthaler; Basel, Switzerland; 1832; cardboard, paper; Georg Duthaler, donated from bequest 2000, VI 69461
- 32 Autograph book; Zurich, Switzerland; 1914-1930; paper, leather; collector unknown, VI 68680
- 33 Friendship memento; Zurich, Switzerland; around 1830; cardboard, paper; collected by Marie Rieber, donated 1921, VI 9581
- 34 Autograph book of Margrit Schüpbach; Basel, Switzerland; 1918; paper, cardboard; donated from bequest 2000, VI 69462
- 35 Autograph book; Basel, Switzerland; 1923-1926; paper, cardboard; collected by Verena Strub, donated 2008, VI 70358
- 36 Autograph book of L. Schlatter; Cham, Zug, Switzerland; 1883; paper, flower; collected by L. Schlatter, donated 1958, VI 24469

Souvenirs from travels and events

A souvenir embodies and embeds memories, be it of a journey, an event, or a personal relationship. As such, a souvenir is not necessarily a singular object; it only acquires meaning through its connection with personal memories.

Souvenirs became mass ware in the course of the 19th century and the growth of tourism. Often they are models of memorable sites one once visited. The little plaques affixed to walking sticks tell of landscapes wandered through and of places visited. Keepsakes that people bring back with them from pilgrimages can also serve as amulets. Fragments of the Berlin Wall have become reminders of the end of the Cold War and of the reunification of Germany.

Souvenirs are collected to prevent forgetting. Their physical presence brings to mind the past and the absent: the feeling of having been there, of having been part of something.

- 37 Cock; Kirovsk, Murmansk, Russia; 1970s; ceramics; Franz Carl Weber, purchased 1973, VI 42254
- 38 Vessel flute tortoise; Masaya, Nicaragua; before 1990; clay, colour; acquired at Nuremberg Christmas Market, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVb 6119
- 39 Vessel for water from the Jordan River; Jerusalem, Israel; around 1965; wood, plastic, sheet metal, paper; collected by Susi Guggenheim-Weil, purchased 1985, VI 59672
- 40 Figures in traditional costume; Budapest, Hungary; before 1990; wood, plastic, textile; collector unknown, VI 71205
- 41 Vessel for water from Lourdes; Lourdes, Hautes-Pyrénées, France; around 1900; sheet metal, cotton, water; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1983, VI 57482
- 42 Bus; Colombia; no date; clay, colour, wire, paper; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 27051
- 43-44 Two walking sticks; Seelisberg, Uri, Switzerland; around 1950; wood, horn, metal; purchased from Antikstube Rösli Muster Riehen, VI 67652, VI 67653
- 45 Shrine of St Michael; Monte Sant'Angelo, Apulia, Italy; around 1970; plastic, cardboard; collected by Robert Wildhaber, donated 1974, VI 42897
- 46 Snow globe with the leaning Towers of Bologna; Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, Italy; around 1985; plastic; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, donated 1987, VI 61907
- 47 Vessel flute tortoise; Masaya, Nicaragua; before 1990; clay, colour; acquired at Nuremberg Christmas Market, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVb 6120
- 48 Plate with Statue of Liberty; New York, USA; before 1990; ceramics; collector unknown, purchase 1990, VI 71167
- 49 Clay double vessel flute with farmer and wife; Ayacucho, Peru; around 1977; clay, colour; acquired at the Zurich Flea Market, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26610

- 50 Wall plate after draft by Dölf Mettler; Langenthal, Bern, Switzerland; 1987; porcelain; collected by Georg Duthaler, donated 1988, VI 62168
- 51 Cup <Remembrance of Sameiro>; Braga, Portugal; around 1985; ceramics; collected by Theo Gantner, purchased for the museum 1986, VI 60998
- 52 Statue of Liberty; New York, USA; around 1980; metal, felt; collected by Theo Gantner, donated 1990, VI 63881.02
- 53 White wine glass <Wedding Rita & Philippe>; Switzerland, 1985; glass; collected by Dominik Wunderlin, donated 1998, VI 69169
- 54 Cup <Trench Warfare>; Germany; before 1981; ceramics; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1981, VI 53744
- 55 Cake figure of wedding couple; Alsace, France; around 1920; gesso; collected by Rosemarie Stutz, purchased 1972, VI 40847
- 56 Eiffel tower; Paris, France; before 1979; plastic; collected by Marianne Stalder, donated 1985, VI 59733.07
- 57 Bus as pencil rack; Haiti; 1995-2001; wood, colour; collected by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser, IVc 27074
- 58 Virgin Mary with Child; Mariastein, Solothurn, Switzerland; around 1990; plastic; collected by Dominik Wunderlin, purchased for the museum 1990, VI 64155
- 59 Strasbourg Cathedral; Strasbourg, Bas-Rhin, France; around 1975; metal; collector unknown, VI 68645
- 60 Snow globe with church of Mariazell; Mariazell, Styria, Austria; around 1955; plastic, water; collected by Robert Wildhaber 1957, VI 23632
- 61 Windmill; Netherlands; around 1930; ceramics; collected by Rudolf and Margrit Kaufmann, bequest 1987, VI 61584
- 62 Share taxi; Ecuador; before 2003; ceramics, glue, metal; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH UFO-Ecuador 001
- 63 Plastiscope with St Beatus Caves; Germany; before 1979; plastic; collected by Marianne Stalder, donated 1985, VI 59733.08
- 64 Bell; Altdorf, Uri, Switzerland; before 1990; metal; collector unknown, VI 71176
- 65 Sacred sand; Bethlehem, Israel; around 1985; paper, sand, flower seeds; collected by Farid Sakran purchased 1987, VI 61976
- 66 White wine glass; Lörrach, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; 1977; glass; collected by Max Behr, donated 1986, VI 61013
- 67 Album; Jerusalem, Israel; around 1900; wood, paper, dried plants; collected by Rosemarie Stutz, purchased 1982, VI 55686
- 68 Drinking glass; Lourdes, Hautes-Pyrénées, France; around 1900; glass; collected by Rosemarie Stutz, purchased 1985, VI 59863
- 69 Virgin Mary with Infant Jesus; Einsiedeln, Schwyz, Switzerland; around 1950; porcelain; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1982, VI 56625
- 70 Bust of Napoleon; Basel, Basel-Stadt, Switzerland; around 1910; metal, marble; collected by Christian Kaufmann, donated 1986, VI 61091
- 71 Box picture of Virgin Mary in an aureole; Einsiedeln, Schwyz, Switzerland; before 1960; glass, gesso, artificial flowers; collected by Erwin Burckhardt, purchased 1960, VI 26751
- 72 Sacred soil; Nazareth, Israel; around 1985; wood, plastic, soil; collected by Farid Sakran, purchased 1987, VI 61980
- 73 Russian doll; Moscow, Russia; around 1991; wood; Amphora Trading Company, purchased 1992, VI 65390
- 74 Schnapps glass; Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany; around 1950; glass; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64231

- 75 Nativity figure of President Porfirio Díaz; Tlaquepaque, Mexico; before 1977; ceramics; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 8258
- 76 Russian doll; Khokhloma, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia; 1991; wood; Amphora Trading Company, purchased 1991, VI 64863.01
- 77 White wine glass; Moudon, Vaud, Switzerland; 1950; glass; collected by Ernst J. Huber, donated 1978, VI 49227
- 78 Drinking cup; Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic; before 1980; porcelain; Wizo Bazaar, purchased 1980, VI 51417
- 79 Cream jar in shape of a cow; Mariastein, Solothurn, Switzerland; around 1990; stoneware; collected by Dominik Wunderlin, purchased for the museum 1990, VI 64146
- 80 Two castanets; Mallorca, Spain; 1960; wood, silk; collected by Charles Hoeffleur, bequest 1990, VI 64139.01, VI 64139.02
- 81 Church Mariazell; Mariazell, Styria, Austria; around 1950; metal; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1982, VI 56626
- 82 Beer mug with stork's nest <Alsace>; Alsace, France; 1990; glass; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased 1991, VI 64888
- 83 Sacred soil; Jerusalem, Israel; around 1980; wood, glass, plastic, paper, soil; collected by Vreni Trümpy, donated 1980, VI 51827
- 84 Plastiscope with Jasna Góra Monastery; Czestochowa, Silesia, Poland; around 1985; plastic; collected by Janusz Kamocki, purchased 1988, VI 62570.02
- 85 Capitoline wolf; Rome, Italy; around 1950; metal, stone, felt; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64250
- 86 Cockerel; Sao Martinho de Galegos, Barcelos, Portugal; around 1965; ceramics; collected by Hans Peter His, bequest 1974, H 0914.05
- 87 Ocarina with Andean motives; Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26559
- 88 Jug in the shape of a bull; Priego, Cuenca, Spain; before 1985; ceramics; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 13395
- 89 Flask in the shape of the Madonna for water from Lourdes; Lourdes, Hautes-Pyrénées, France; around 1950; plastic; collected by Werner Bellwald, donated 1985, VI 60281
- 90 Vessel flute bird; Pisac, Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26622
- 91 Hen; Kirovsk, Murmansk, Russia; 1970s; ceramics; Franz Carl Weber, purchased 1973, VI 42255
- 92 Our Lady of Guadalupe; Mexico; around 1996; plastic; collector unknown, VI 68636
- 93 Schnapps glass <Hallstatt>; Hallstatt, Upper Austria, Austria; before 1981; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1981, VI 53739
- 94 Wind-up cats; Nuremberg, Bavaria, Germany; 1952; sheet metal, tinsplate; collected by Rosemarie Müller, bequest 2010, VI 70796.02
- 95 Double vessel flute old man and child; Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; acquired at El Indio Basel, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26670
- 96 Vessel flute bird; Pisac, Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26616
- 97 Mercy altar; produced in Augsburg, Germany; purchased in Mariastein, Solothurn, Switzerland; around 1950; pewter; collected by Theo Gantner 1966, VI 34355
- 98 Vessel flute tortoise; Pisac, Peru; no date; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26615.03
- 99 Plastiscope with Anthony of Padua; Padua, Italy; before 1969; plastic; collected by K. Dox, donated 1969, VI 36616
- 100 Figure in traditional costume; Black Forest, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; before 1990; plastic, textile; collector unknown, VI 71206
- 101 Virgin Mary with Child; Mariastein, Solothurn, Switzerland; around 1990; plastic, glass, cable, paper; collected by Dominik Wunderlin, purchased for the museum 1990, VI 64154

- 102 Vessel flute tortoise; Pisac, Peru; no date; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26633
- 103 Climbing boots; Adelboden, Bern, Switzerland; before 1990; leather, plastic, metal; collector unknown, VI 71182
- 104 Ocarina; Otavalo, Ecuador; around 1997; clay, colour; acquired at Bregenz town festival, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26687
- 105 Cockerel; Barcelos, Portugal; 1970s; ceramics; collected by Walter Georg Altwegg, purchased 1974, VI 43400
- 106 Fragments of the Berlin Wall; Berlin, Germany; 1989; stone, cement, paint; collected by Theo Gantner, donated 1991, VI 64762
- 107-109 Three Russian dolls; Khokhloma, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia; 1991; wood; Amphora Trading Company, purchased 1991, VI 64863.02
- 110 Cologne Cathedral; Cologne, Germany; before 1980; metal; collector unknown, VI 51617
- 111 Cockerel of Barcelos; Portugal; before 1998; ceramics; collector unknown, VI 69165
- 112 Ocarina with Andean motives; Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26581
- 113 Ash tray Cologne Cathedral; Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany; around 1900; metal; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64219
- 114 Beer mug with couple in traditional costume; Black Forest, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; before 1980; glass; Werner Rothpletz, bequest 1980, VI 52671
- 115 Vessel flute owl; Pisac, Peru; around 1992; clay, colour; acquired at the Caritas Fairness Shop Zurich, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26631
- 116 Plastiscope with Jasna Góra Monastery; Czestochowa, Silesia, Poland; around 1985; plastic; collected by Janusz Kamocki, purchased 1988, VI 62570.01
- 117 Cup <Greetings from Bad Nauheim Sprudel>; Bad Nauheim, Hesse, Germany; before 1981; ceramics; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1981, VI 53738
- 118 Cup <Townhall, Graz>; Graz, Styria, Austria; before 1981; ceramics; collector unknown, donated 1981, VI 55268
- 119 Fragments of the Berlin Wall; Berlin, Germany; 1989; stone, cement, paint; collected by Theo Gantner, donated 1991, VI 64762
- 120 Cup <Greetings from Maria Wörth>; Maria Wörth, Carinthia, Austria; before 1981; ceramics; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1981, VI 53732
- 121 Our Lady of Guadalupe; Mexico; around 1980; wood, glass, cardboard; purchase S. and W. Roth 1997, VI 68920
- 122 Wall plate with Sicilian cart; Sicily, Italy; around 1970; ceramics; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64239
- 123 Ocarina with Andean motives; Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26567
- 124 Wall plate with Manneken Pis; Brussels, Belgium; around 1970; ceramics; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64238
- 125 Vessel flute bird; Pisac, Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26623
- 126 William Tell and Walter; Switzerland; before 1990; plastic; collector unknown, VI 71178
- 127 Eiffel tower; Paris, France; 1970s; metal; collected by Werner Rothpletz, donated 1978, VI 49087.02
- 128 Vessel flute owl; Pisac, Peru; around 1992; clay, colour; acquired at the Caritas Fairness Shop Zurich, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26632.03
- 129 First communion glass; Alsace, France; 1982; glass; collected by Rosemarie Stutz; purchased 1982, VI 55676
- 130 Plate with Pope John Paul II.; Milan, Italy; before 1981; ceramics; collected by Theo Gantner 1981, VI 53430
- 131 Bust with child <Austrian Touris Club>; Vienna, Austria; 1914; metal; collector unknown, VI 68106

- 132 Snow globe Virgin with Child; Einsiedeln, Schwyz, Switzerland; around 1960; plastic; collector unknown, VI 68647.01
- 133 Cow bell; Geneva, Switzerland, 1960s; metal, felt, cotton strap; collected by Raquel Rodriguez Sosa, donated 2001, VI 69963.13
- 134 Cockerel; Sao Martinho de Galegos, Barcelos, Portugal; around 1965; ceramics; collected by Hans Peter His, bequest 1974, H 0914.10
- 135 Snow globe historical Ulm; Ulm, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; before 1990; plastic; collector unknown, purchase 1990, VI 71170
- 136 Cup <Melk an der Wachau>; Melk an der Wachau, Lower Austria, Austria; before 1981; ceramics; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1981, VI 53735
- 137 Leaning Tower of Pisa; Pisa, Tuscany, Italy; around 1985; plastic, gesso; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64228
- 138 Schnapps glass <Leopoldsberg – Greetings from Vienna>; Vienna, Austria; before 1981; glass; purchased by Wolfgang Riedl 1981, VI 53740
- 139 Virgin Mary with Infant Jesus; Einsiedeln, Schwyz, Switzerland; around 1960; gesso; Swiss National Museum, donated 1983, VI 57101
- 140 Paperweight; Mariazell, Austria; around 1935; glass, paper; collector unknown, donated 1980, VI 51477
- 141 Paperweight; Pörschach, Carinthia, Austria; around 1950; glass, paper; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1983, VI 57476
- 142 Vessel for water from Lourdes; Lourdes, Hautes-Pyrénées, France; before 2011; sheet metal; collected by Margret Ribbert, donated 2011, VI 71084
- 143 First communion glass; Alsace, France; 1982; glass; collected by Rosemarie Stutz; purchased 1982, VI 55677
- 144 Vessel flute hen; Pisac, Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26621
- 145 Virgin Mary with Infant Jesus; Mariazell, Styria, Austria; 1959; metal; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1982, VI 56606
- 146 Vase in shape of a cow <Rhine Falls>; Switzerland; before 1939; ceramics; collector unknown, VI 71241
- 147 Paperweight; Venice, Venetia, Italy; around 1950; glass; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1983, VI 57473
- 148 Clog; Netherlands; before 1990; wood; collector unknown, VI 71179
- 149 Music box with Theresia of Lisieux; Lisieux, Calvados, France, produced in Italy; before 1988; plastic; collected by Theo Gantner, purchased for the museum 1988, VI 62145
- 150 Drinking glass <800 Years Mariazell>; Mariazell, Styria, Austria; vor 1981; glass; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1981, VI 53728
- 151 Vase; Titisee, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; before 1990; ceramics; collector unknown, VI 71168
- 152 Vessel flute owl; Pisac, Peru; around 1992; clay, colour; acquired at the Caritas Fairness Shop Zurich, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26632.02
- 153 Snow globe <Good Jesus of the Mount>; Braga, Portugal; around 1980; plastic, water; collected by Theo Gantner, purchased for the museum 1986, VI 61001
- 154 Vessel for water from Virgin Mary's Well; Nazareth, Israel; around 1985; wood, plastic, water; collected by Farid Sakran, purchased 1987, VI 61981
- 155 Bus as pencil rack; Haiti; 1995-2001; wood, colour; collected by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser, IVc 27073
- 156 Sacred soil; Israel; around 1960; nylon, soil; collected by Ludwig Kahn, bequest 1973, VI 41772
- 157-161 Five thimbles; London, England; 1981-1986; porcelain, silver; collected by Gertrud Krattiger, donated 1994, VI 66892.01-04, VI 66892.06
- 162 Vessel flute hen; Pisac, Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26619
- 163 Vessel flute owl; Pisac, Peru; around 1992; clay, colour; acquired at the Caritas Fairness Shop Zurich, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26632.01

- 164 Bottle «Mobilization 1939/40»; French Switzerland, 20th c.; ceramics; collected by Dominik Wunderlin, donated 1998, VI 69171
- 165 Mary with shepherd children; Fatima, Santarém, Portugal; around 1950; plastic; collected by Maja Fehlmann-von der Mühl, donated 1989, VI 63017
- 166 Statue of St Peter; Rome, Italy; around 1870; cast metal; collected by Werner Konrad Jaggi, purchased 1973, VI 42590
- 167 Shell with Cathedral of Santiago; Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain; 1993; metal, silver; collected by Othmar Kuhn, VI 66462
- 168 Ocarina with Andean motives; Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26563.01
- 169 Flower album; Jerusalem, Israel; around 1910; wood, paper; collected by Wolfgang Riedl, purchased 1993, VI 66143
- 170 Pencil sharpener Statue of Liberty; New York, USA; before 1990; metal, plastic; c, VI 71180
- 171 Paperweight; Interlaken, Bern, Switzerland; around 1950; glass, paper; collected by Katharina Eder Matt, purchased for the museum 1991, VI 64230
- 172 Ocarina; Otavalo, Ecuador; around 1997; clay, colour; acquired at Bregenz town festival, collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26682
- 173-174 Two vessel flutes birds; Pisac, Peru; around 1997; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26617, IVc 26618
- 175 Vessel flute tortoise; Pisac, Peru; no date; clay, colour; collected by Marcelle Geiger-Vifian, IVc 26615.05

2 Mnemonic devices

Forgetting is a commonplace process. To thwart unwanted forgetting, people have developed a wide range of objects and techniques for sustaining memory.

Ordered sequences, associations – so-called aide-memoires – and signs help people to remember and recall knowledge. Knots, notches, lines, and images serve as memory supports. They were used to retain extensive numbers and quantities in the context of tribute payments and barter or trade deals as well as narrative sequences of mythical or historical events.

Mnemonic media not only serve to support and convey messages, they actually often also shape their contents. On the one hand, they are subject to technological and societal change, that is, they become outdated and then merely become witnesses of a bygone age. On the other hand, new media create novel forms and capacities of remembering.

Tally sticks

Across Europe, we come across notched sticks that serve the purpose of documenting arrangements: the notches are reminders of agreements, of ownership relations, or of certain duties, in other words, they act as a kind of deed.

Some of the most famous examples are the so-called water tallies from the canton of Valais. The notches on the sticks indicated when and for how long a family had the right to use the common irrigation system. Turn tallies denoted in which order a specific household was responsible for performing certain duties; milk tallies recorded the amount of milk produced by a cow; capital tallies served as debt certificates, while tithe tallies recorded the amount of taxes paid. With the help of pasture tallies, the rights in pasture were documented: each tally

was marked with a house sign and their edges had gaps into which respective twin tallies fitted perfectly. The combination of house sign and notches indicated how many cows a household was allowed to graze on the communal alpine pasture.

- 176 Trade-off tallies; Tschierf, Grisons, Switzerland; before 1920; wood, cord; purchased by Moritz Tramèr 1920, negotiated by Leopold Rütimeyer, VI 9257
- 177 Tithe tallies; Visperterminen, Valais, Switzerland; before 1904; wood, cord, wire; collected by Friedrich Gottlieb Stebler, Kauf 1904, VI 274
- 178 Capital tallies; Steg, Valais, Switzerland; before 1904; wood, leather, wire; collected by Friedrich Gottlieb Stebler, purchased 1904, VI 276
- 179 Pasture tally; central Switzerland; before 1968; wood; Antikstube Riehen, purchased 1968, VI 36254
- 180-184 Five water tallies; Grengiols near Brig, Valais, Switzerland; before 1917; wood; former owner Sabina Gemet, purchased by Annemarie Weis 1917, VI 7539-7543
- 185-186 Two milk tallies; Les Haudères, Valais, Switzerland; 1890 and 1910; wood; collected by Leopold Rütimeyer, donated 1914, VI 6221, VI 6222
- 187 Pasture tally; Kippel, Lötschen Valley, Valais, Switzerland; around 1900; wood; collected by Leopold Rütimeyer, donated 1916, VI 6735.01-05
- 188-191 Four sheep tallies; Binntal, Valais, Switzerland; before 1917; leather; former owner Franz Joseph Thenisch and Clemenz Thenisch, respectively, donated by Annemarie Weis 1917, VI 7424-7427
- 192-202 Eleven ears of goats deceased on the alpine pasture; Disentis, Grisons, Switzerland; before 1941; goats' ears, string, leather, metal; collector unknown, VI 16098

Counted prayers

The rosary is a string of knots or beads used to record the number of recited, repetitive prayers. The beads serve as orientation while reciting the sequence of prayers. After every Ave Maria, the fingers pass on to the next bead; after ten they reach a large bead which indicates it is time to recite the Lord's prayer. In this way, the worshipper could fully concentrate on the prayers and did not have to keep track of how far he had come down the line of prayers.

In the canton of Uri, children recorded the number of rosaries and Lord's prayers they had prayed with help of a St Nicolas tally. When the time came, they were submitted to St Nicolas, or to Baby Jesus at Christmas.

- 203 Rosary with crucifix; Courrendlin, Jura, Switzerland; before 1904; wood, metal; collector unknown, VI 137
- 204 Rosary with penny of grace; Dottenberg, Lucerne, Switzerland; around 1800; wood, metal; collected by Jakob Lörch, purchased 1910, VI 4281
- 205 St Nicolas axe indicating the number of rosaries and Lord's prayers recited in a year; Uri, Switzerland; before 1922; wood; collected by Leopold Rütimeyer, donated 1922, VI 9695

Representation of the «Lord's Prayer»

In Bolivia, Valentin Jaquet from Basel collected a representation of how Christian prayers were documented and taught. Here the characters for the Lord's Prayer are arranged on a flat surface in the form of clay figurines and it is read in a spiral, starting at the edge and working into the middle.

- 206 Clay plaque «The Lord's Prayer»; Sr. Acuña; Pututaca, San Lucas, Chuquisaca, Bolivia; around 1980; clay, feather, wool, wood; collected by Valentin Jaquet, Bo 1390

Commemorated warrior status

Among the Konyak-Naga in the borderlands of northeast India and Myanmar, the status of a person is of pivotal significance. Today status is defined primarily by educational and professional success. Before the arrival of the Christian missions, men acquired personal status mainly through staging feasts of merit and boasting feats of war. Successful warriors enjoyed the privilege of donning a special adornment. They fastened their hair into a topknot which they then adorned with flat boards. The figures depicted on the boards represented the enemies slain by the owner, thus signifying prowess and warrior status.

207 Hair ornament; Konyak-Naga; Chui village, Nagaland, India; 1st half of 20th c.; wood; collected by Milada Ganguli 1990, IIa 10493

208 Hair ornament; Konyak-Naga; Wakching village, Nagaland, India; before 1937; wood, goat's hair, madder (*Rubia sikkimensis*); collected by Hans-Eberhard Kauffmann 1937, IIB 1141

Engraved history

Bamboo tubes with (pyro)engravings served many purposes, for example, as flutes, vessels, percussion instruments, or as amulets when travelling. The engraved drawings show historical scenes from everyday life of the indigenous people of New Caledonia and encounters with their French colonial rulers. The Kanak not only suffered under colonial rule but also from imported sicknesses, which caused many deaths. They revolted several times and each time the French responded with punitive expeditions and deportations.

209 Decorated bamboo tube; Thio, New Caledonia; 19th c.; bamboo, soot; collected by engineer Vogelsang 1935, Vb 227

210 Decorated bamboo tube; Oubatche, New Caledonia; 19th c.; bamboo, soot; collected by Fritz Sarasin 1913; Vb 2195

211 Decorated bamboo tube; New Caledonia; probably 18th c.; bamboo, soot; according to the filing card, originally collected by Georg Foster on his journey with Captain Cook, collected by Mittelschweizerische Geographische-Commercielle Gesellschaft Aarau 1918, Vb 2944

Counting sticks

The Kwanga of northwest Papua New Guinea use counting sticks – bundles of soapberry tree twigs – called *wasantlambi* as mnemonic devices. The bundles indicate how many wild pigs a man has killed in his life. The pigs are given to his wife and children or his ritual exchange partners. In the so-called *kwaramba* ritual, the distribution of hunted wild pigs features prominently. Sharing and reciprocating are key means for maintaining social balance in the community. Upon death, the number of pigs the deceased had killed and distributed in his life are listed. The process serves as a kind of record to determine and, if necessary, balance debts and credits. Ritual exchange relationships are passed down from father to son and often extend across the whole region.

212-213 Two bundles of twigs *wasantlambi*; Kwanga; Bongos, Dreikikir, Papua New Guinea; before 1981; twigs (*Pometia pinnata*), rattan; collected by Markus Schindlbeck 1981, Vb 29020, Vb 29021

Knots as mnemonic devices

The knotted ritual cords call to mind and convey episodes and sequences of the foundation myths of the Nyaura people of the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea. The knotted cords are the prerogative of so-called big men. Every cord represents the mythical migration of a clan, featuring all significant places and events. So as not to be forgotten, the stories are recited in

song cycles, often lasting hours, at all major ritual events. When reciting the cycle, a big man lets the knotted cord pass through his hand, calling to mind all significant events and places experienced during the mythical wandering and thus securing the history of his clan. Since, according to the Nyaura conception of time, the mythical and the present are coexistent, the chiefs are able to amend and update their clan's history at the same time.

214-216 Three knotted cord *kirugu*; David Kisonдеми, Lami; Nyaura-Iatmul; Kandingei, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea; before 1984; betel nut fibre (*Areca catechu*), cord: green cottonwood (*Hibiscus Tiliaceus*); collected by Jürg Wassmann 1984, Vb 29522, Vb 29526, Vb 29527

Recorded data

In the Inca empire (ca. 1400-1532) and during the early colonial period (16th century) in the Andean region, accounting, statistical and strategic information, as well as historical events were recorded and transmitted with the help of knotted cords (Quechua *kipu*).

A *kipu* consisted of a main cord and several ancillary cords which were knotted at fixed intervals for the digits one, ten, and hundred. The number of loops equalled the figure by which the digit had to be multiplied. For instance, a knot with three loops at the digit ten (3 x 10) equalled 30. The meaning of the twining, the colours, as well as the materials were gradually forgotten from the 16th century on, after the Spanish colonial authorities banned the use of the cords. Currently, researchers at the Harvard Khipu Database are working on them. During their work at the Museum der Kulturen Basel, the researchers rediscovered one of the largest known assemblages; the last time it had been scientifically investigated was some 90 years ago.

217 Assemblage of ten numerical khipu and single cords; Peru; 1400-1530; twined cotton; probably collected by Eduard Gaffron, IVc 366.03

Australian Dreaming

Two sisters travelled from Wawilak as far as Arnhem Land with their children. Tired, they made camp at a billabong. Whilst washing in the pool, menstrual blood flowed into the water. Maddened by this <desecration>, the great mythical serpent Jurlungur rose to the surface, intent on devouring the human intruders. The sisters quickly began to sing and dance. Jurlungur sent a large rain to stop them; then he ate them. But he couldn't keep them down and had to regurgitate them. They fell into an ant hill where they were woken by the ants biting them. They began to dance again, and again Jurlungur sent a large rain and then devoured them for good. Afterwards, Jurlungur flew across the lands and created plants, animals, and humans. Jurlungur instructed the people how to dance and celebrate the event in commemoration.

The story of the Wawilak sisters from the Dreaming is known to Aboriginal people across Australia in many versions. The artist Yilkarri Katani (Lyagalawumir) painted them on bark shortly before his death in October 1956. His totem was the python, Jurlungur. His kin relationship with the serpent gave him the right to paint the Wawilak sisters.

The Dreaming refers to the period when mythical beings like the rainbow serpent Jurlungur created all the things humans required, such as landscapes, animals, plants, the social order, ceremonies, songs, and myths. The Dreaming does not merely refer to a long-distant past, it is still in force in the present and will remain so in future, as long as it is kept alive through ceremonies and rituals. Bark paintings featuring motifs from the dreaming are a speciality of

Arnhem Land and of comparatively recent origin. The images serve as memory supports for the orally transmitted stories.

The anthropologist and artist Karel Kupka, who collected for the Museum der Kulturen, was one of the first to appreciate and document the individual work of indigenous artists.

- 218 Bark painting; Yilkarri Katani; Milingimbi, Australia; before 1957; bark, pigments, Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus*); collected by Karel Kupka 1957, Va 905
- 219 Bark painting; Dawarangulili and Dawidi; Milingimbi, Australia; before 1957; bark, pigments, Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus*); collected by Karel Kupka 1957, Va 902
- 220 Bark painting; Mawalan; Milingimbi, Australia; before 1957; bark, pigments, Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus*); collected by Karel Kupka 1957, Va 909

Neolithic encounters

Neolithic rock drawings and engravings from the Western Sahara rank among the oldest artistic expressions found on the African continent. In 1961-62, the Swiss geologist Emile Alexandre Rod, who at the time was working for the Atlantic Refining Company, which belonged to the Shell Group, came across a number of stone slabs engraved with pictures which he took with him. On some of the slabs there were animals such as elephants and white rhinos that normally need a sufficient supply of water to survive. The representations indicated that, during that age, the Sahara was a much moister and greener region.

Over the last decades, the most important rock painting sites in today's politically contested Western Sahara have been recorded, thus offering a basis to protect them as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site against destruction and theft. According to the collection records, Emile Alexandre Rod «received permission from the military administration – at the time the only authority in Spanish Sahara – to export his finds», but this critical document is no longer to be found at the Museum.

- 221 Rock engraving of two ostriches, a few antelopes, and a hyena; Lemcaiteb, Saguia el-Harma; Western Sahara/Morocco; probably Neolithic age; quartz sandstone; collected by Emile Alexandre Rod, purchased 1977, III 21320
- 222 Rock engraving of a white rhino; Uad Sfa, Saguia el-Harma, Western Sahara/Morocco; probably Neolithic age; quartz sandstone; collected by Emile Alexandre Rod, purchased 1977, III 21315
- 223 Rock engraving of elephant surrounded by humans; Uad Sfa, Saguia el-Harma, Western Sahara/Morocco; probably Neolithic age; quartz sandstone; collected by Emile Alexandre Rod, purchased 1977, III 21316

Envisioned rituals

The Nazca culture evolved in the coastal desert of southern Peru between 200 BC and the 7th century. Ceramics are an important source for understanding Nazca culture because the polychrome ceramics represented a key medium for memorizing and communicating religious practices. They feature representations of the great <anthropomorphic mythical being>. The depiction with field crops refers to the being's significance for the agricultural cycle, fertility, and the renewal of life. While the stirrup vessels served ceremonial purposes, the bowls were used for food and drink. The ceramics, which were excavated in settlements and dwelling houses, reminded the users daily of the basic principles of Nazca cosmology and the authority of the ruling class.

Many of the ceramics were looted and found their way into museums and private collections through the channels of illegal trade.

- 224 Double-spouted stirrup vessels; Nazca; southern Peru; 0-650; clay, colour; collected by Henry Reichlen, IVc 3765
- 225 Double-spouted stirrup vessel; Nazca; southern Peru; 0-650; clay, colour; collected by Hans Röthlingshöfer, IVc 25827
- 226 Double-spouted stirrup vessel; Nazca; southern Peru; 0-650; clay, colour; collected by Pessina, IVc 14705
- 227 Bowl with chili pattern; Nazca; southern Peru; 0-650; clay, colour; collected by Henry Reichlen, IVc 3780
- 228 Double-spouted stirrup vessel; Nazca; southern Peru; 0-650; clay, colour; collected by Henry Reichlen, IVc 3768

3 Ancestors and genealogies

Ancestors are represented in form of figures, masks, and reliefs. They can either be forebears with known names and lives, or mythical ancestors. In many places, they still impact on the lives of their descendants as well as the environment. To appease them or hinder them from returning with malevolent intent, they are venerated.

Ancestors often appear in the shape of mythical beings: they once configured the world and still play a significant role in sustaining and perpetuating life. They are name givers and define membership in families and larger kin groups. Often, they are responsible for conferring rights, duties, and status. Genealogies determine the line of inheritance and succession to the throne, and legitimize claims to power and ownership.

Among other things, objects are important sources for documenting and reconstructing of history. Removing them from their original places – as happened during colonial times – makes access to one's own history difficult, if not even impossible.

Interrupted ancestral ties

In the Kingdom of Benin, the death of a ruler (*oba*) was followed by elaborate funeral ceremonies. The eldest son, and heir to throne, erected an altar in memory of the deceased king by having a memorial head cast in bronze. In the Edo language, the term <remember>, *sa-e-y-ama*, literally means <casting a motif in bronze>. The memorial head as well as the other ritual objects included on the altar commemorated the king's deeds and the glory of his kingdom.

In contrast to the royal bronze heads, those of dignitaries were carved in wood. They served as reminders of the deceased dignitary's good conduct in life, his wealth, and his successes, and were also placed on an altar in his memory. The bereaved offered sacrifices in his honour. These, in turn, lent the ancestors in the beyond the necessary strength to protect the living.

In the 17th century, the courtyards at the royal palace of Benin were lined with columns bearing bronze relief plates. Later they served as a pictorial inventory and mnemonic device for the intricate court rituals. On the one hand, they show battle scenes from the 16th century, on the other, exquisitely clad court dignitaries at ceremonial events. During colonization, the Benin royal palace was stormed and looted by a British punitive expedition in 1897. Over 4,000 objects were carried off to London as booty and sold across the world. In Benin, the theft left behind a painful void in the commemoration of kings and the kingdom's

history. In the ongoing discussions on the provenance of museum collections, the Benin Bronzes have become a significant symbol. Today, there is a discussion about how to act on the situation and how restitution could be made.

- 229 Memorial head of a ruler (*oba*); Benin City, Nigeria; probably 16th c.; bronze; William Downing Webster, purchased 1899, III 1033
- 230 Memorial head of a dignitary (*uhunmwun elao*); Benin City, Nigeria; before 1897; wood, brass and copper sheet; Umlauff, purchased 1904, III 1935
- 231 Relief plate; Benin City, Nigeria; probably 17th c.; brass; William Downing Webster, purchased 1899, III 1041

Ruling dynasties

Records of ruling dynasties and jubilees occupy a significant place in Maya history. The lintel from Tikal is an important document for understanding Mayan history, society, and cosmology, and is reminiscent of probably the most powerful Mayan ruler of his time: Yik'in Chan K'awiil, the 27th divine ruler of the Tikal dynasty. The lintel shows him in the year 746 in connection with the commemoration of the conquest of the city of Yaxha three years before. It shows the ruler on a palanquin that features the tutelary deity of Yaxha, which was captured by Tikal.

Over the last decades, the deciphering of the Mayan script has made great progress: the epigraph describes the depicted commemoration staged by Yik'in Chan K'awiil and legitimizes his rule by including the event in his dynasty's ancestral line of descent. The lintel was brought to Switzerland by the Basel scholar Carl Gustav Bernoulli in 1878. In letters to other explorers, he notes that he had removed the lintel from the temple and exported it with permission by the Guatemalan authorities.

The plaster casts of the stone reliefs from the city of Yaxchilán were brought to Basel by the explorer Désiré Charnay in 1883 in the context of a scholarly exchange. One plate explains the history of the city's ruling dynasty; the second plate describes in words and images events that occurred on 3 April 757, the fifth anniversary of the enthronement of the ruler <Bird Jaguar IV>. He is shown dancing with his son, the later ruler <Shield Jaguar IV>.

- 232 Plaster cast, Lintel 2, Structure 33 Yaxchilán; Maya; Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico; plaster, wood; 1882; original 757; collected by Désiré Charnay, IVb 1381
- 233 Plaster cast, Lintel 35, Structure 12 Yaxchilán; Maya; Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico; plaster, wood; 1881-1883; original mid 8th c.; collected by Désiré Charnay, IVb 1383
- 234 Lintel 3, Temple IV Tikal; Maya; Tikal, Guatemala; 746/747; Sapodilla wood (*Achras zapota L.*), colour pigments; collected by Carl Gustav Bernoulli 1878, IVb 52.01

Legitimization of influence and claims

The map of Tecamachalco combines elements of a Mesoamerican pictorial manuscript and a European map. Work on it began in the mid-16th century by indigenous nobles for the purpose of asserting rightful claims against the Spanish colonial power. Here, indigenous notions of territory, genealogy, property encounter European concepts. Traditionally, claims to land, water rights, tribute payments and services were represented and legitimated through the genealogies of ruling couples. The longest genealogy counts 21 generations. The map and the depicted historiographies were supplemented and amended time and again, and include recorded persons and events from roughly the year 1000 to AD 1725. Up to this day, such historical documents are consulted by village communities to settle land rights issues.

235 Mapa de Tecamachalco (Lienzo Vischer I); probably 16th–18th c., possibly earlier; area around Tecamachalco, Puebla, Mexico; leather, lime, maize-starch; collected by Lukas Vischer 1844, IVb 754

Rituals and rights

To this day, *malagan* carvings are put on display at large ceremonial events which are staged at irregular intervals in parts of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. *malagan* ceremonies are held to commemorate a deceased person. At the same time, the occasions are used to settle debts and resolve conflicts. The carvings are regarded as visualizations of the person being commemorated, although not necessarily in the sense of a portrait. However, remembrance is not necessarily associated with the physical preservation of the sculptures but with ownership in the rights pertaining to the *malagan* motifs and rituals.

After a ritual performance, the *malagan* carvings are either burnt, destroyed, or simply left to decay; in later years they were often also sold to collectors and museums. In the latter – originally not intended – case, the carvings take on a new meaning.

236 *dángala malagan*; Lamusmus, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea; before 1931; wood, pigments, vegetable fibres, mollusc shells; collected by Alfred Bühler 1932, Vb 10569

237 *malagan*; Beilifu, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea; before 1931; wood, pigments, wax, vegetable fibres, mollusc shells; collected by Alfred Bühler 1932, Vb 10576

238 *malagan*; Panafau, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea; before 1931; wood, pigments; collected by Alfred Bühler 1932, Vb 10570

Protective ancestors

Carved wooden figures with human features are common across the island of Borneo. Usually, the ancestor figures erected near communal houses represent recently deceased forebears; occasionally they even show personally recognizable human traits. The sculptures serve as temporary abodes for the spirits of recently deceased persons and represent personal expressions of commemoration. The carved ancestor figures also provide protection by warding off sickness. Figures placed at village entrances, in the fields, or near graveyards have the task of keeping evil spirits away. Their aggressive features and imposing bodies act as effective deterrents.

239 Ancestor figure *hampatong*; probably Siang, Barito headwaters, central Borneo, Indonesia; 19th or early 20th c.; probably ironwood; collected by Paul Wirz 1926, IIC 2463

240 Ancestor figure *hampatong*; probably Ngaju, central Borneo, Indonesia; 20th c.; wood; collected by Anne Morley 1987, on permanent loan FMB, IIC 20274

Present ancestors

Alfred Bühler acquired these figures in Baguia, Timor-Leste (East Timor) in 1935. Unfortunately, he did not detail the circumstances of purchase. However, on some of his photographs, such figures can be seen adorning graves. In those days, the graves were located within the village around the houses, thus securing the presence and proximity of the ancestors whose task it was to protect the living from danger and ill fortune. The wooden figures kept alive the memory of the deceased and their continued influence in the present. Or, put differently, they constantly admonished the living, not to forget them.

241-242 Couple of ancestor figures, female figure *atewaa tufu*, male figure *atewaa namie*; Makasae; Baguia, Timor-Leste; 19th or early 20th c.; wood; collected by Alfred Bühler 1935, IIC 6410, IIC 6411

Ancestors and status

The two *itara* figures represent an important ancestral couple that belonged to a family on the island of Atauro in Timor Leste (East Timor). The number of figure pairs kept in a ceremonial house was an indication of a family's status. Owing to a ban by the Protestant church, ritual ancestor worship has more or less disappeared in the last few decades. Before the arrival of the missions, clan elders knew long genealogies by heart, reaching back as far as their clan's foundation. Reciting genealogies on the occasion of social gatherings not only secured the history of the community but also its future existence.

Towards the end of Indonesian occupation in the 1990s, many indigenous inhabitants of Atauro were forced to sell off many of their possessions in order to survive which is probably how the figure couple found its way into the art trade. It is a reminder of a period of violence, loss, and deprivation. At the same time, it points to a hopefully brighter future. Since the independence of Timor Leste in 2002, a new market for these exceptional carvings has emerged.

243-244 Ancestral couple *itara*; Island of Atauro, Timor-Leste; 20th c.; wood; purchased from August Flick 1992, IIC 21141a, IIC 21141b

Powerful ancestors

For the people of the Indonesian island of Nias, ancestors (*adu*) are of pivotal significance. Before Christianization, ancestors – male as well as female ancestors – were regarded as powerful beings, with decisive influence on the lives of the people. Carved wooden ancestor figures (*adu zatua*) made up part of every household. They were regarded as the abode of ancestors and treated with great respect, thus ensuring their goodwill and, as a result, their protection.

With the arrival of Christian missions, ancestor figures just about disappeared from everyday life, with many of them ending up in Western museums. The ancestors themselves, however, live on in oral traditions, and genealogies reaching far back into the past are still recited in songs today.

245-249 Five ancestor figures *adu zatua* (female); central Nias, Indonesia; early 20th c.; wood, textile; collected by Paul Wirz 1925, on permanent loan FMB, IIC 2386, IIC 2387, IIC 2390, IIC 2393, IIC 2404

250-253 Four ancestor figures *adu zatua* (male); central Nias, Indonesia; early 20th c.; wood, textile; collected by Paul Wirz 1925, on permanent loan FMB, IIC 2379, IIC 2380, IIC 2403, IIC 2411

Controversial ancestor worship

Among the Iatmul people of the Middle Sepik in Papua New Guinea, *mai* masks are an important component of the ceremonial dance of the same name. The making of the masks and costumes as well as their attunement in the ceremonial house, the dance performance itself, and the rituals that went with it, were subject to strict rules, otherwise contact could not be made with the ancestors being addressed. Today, the dance is hardly performed anymore.

For the purpose of reviving the old dance, modern, urban Iatmul groups rely on video recordings from the 1970s. One of the risks of this method is getting something wrong or making slight changes to the performance, at the cost of upsetting the ancestors. The Iatmul often ask themselves what the ancestors think of the modern world, and debate whether retaining contact with their forebears is the right thing to do or whether it would be better to give up the dance. It not only shows how memory shapes the present but also raises the

question of the power of documentation and the responsibility when handling historical recordings.

- 254-255 Two *mai* masks; Nyaurangei, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea; before 1959; wood, nassa (*Nassariidae*), cowrie (*Cypraeidae*), conus shells (*Conidae*), clay, human hair, boar tusk, fibre bundle; collected by Alfred Bühler 1959, Vb 22138, Vb 22140
- 256 *mai* mask; Yensemangwa, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea; before 1959; wood, pigments, boar tusk, cowrie (*Cypraeidae*), conus shells (*Conidae*); collected by Alfred Bühler 1959, Vb 25355
- 257-258 Two *mai* masks; Yentshan, Middle Sepik, Papua New Guinea; before 1972; wood, pigments, boar tusk, nassa (*Nassariidae*), cowrie (*Cypraeidae*), conus shells (*Conidae*), vegetable fibres, human hair, resin; collected by Jürg Schmid, Florence Weiss, Milan Stanek, Markus Schindlbeck, expedition 1972-74, Vb 32120, Vb 32121

Return of the ancestors

The masks of the Western Guarani of the Gran Chaco in the South American lowlands represent their deceased forebears and ancestors. They are invited to the Feast of the Living and Dead (*arete guasu*) which has been staged at the same time as the Christian carnival since colonial times, and is still of major significance to the Guarani. On the occasion, the ancestors come to eat, drink, and dance with the living for a few days. The figure of the <white man>, in a function as a military man or landowner, and recognizable by his hat and beard, also became incorporated in the ritual in the course of colonization. The festival goes on for three days and ends with the ritual departure of the ancestors. The maskers are accompanied to the river where they wash off their identity as ancestor spirits. The masks were originally either burnt or discarded in the river. The Museum obtained the masks in 1966 from the dealer Boris Malkin and from the anthropologist Jürgen Riester in 1980 and 1981.

- 259 Ancestor mask; Guarani; San Ignacio de Velasco, Santa Cruz, Bolivia; 1963-1966; deer skin, rubber band, string; collected by Jürgen Riester, purchased 1991, IVc 25166
- 260-263 Four ancestor masks; Guarani; Machareti, Chuquisaca, Bolivia; 1963-1966; soft wood, soot, feather, animal skin, bromelia fibre; collected by Jürgen Riester, purchased 1980 and 1991, IVc 22384, IVc 25186, IVc 25187, IVc 25191
- 264-266 Three ancestor masks; Guarani; San Antonio de Parapeti, Santa Cruz, Bolivia; 1964; wood, colour pigments; collected by Borys Malkin, purchased 1966, IVc 10874, IVc 10877, IVc 10878
- 267-269 Three ancestor masks; Guarani; Machareti, Chuquisaca, Bolivia; 1963-1966; soft wood, soot, feather, animal skin, paper, cloth, nail, bromelia fibre; collected by Jürgen Riester, purchased 1980 and 1991, IVc 22386, IVc 25174, IVc 25176

4 Founding Stories

Myths tell of the origins of the world, the birth of humankind, the formation of groups, and the founding of states. Great stories that have come down to us in the form of scripture or epic tales claim to be authoritative, are told over centuries, and are shared by many people. They mediate between individual and collective experience. As the basis of social, religious, and political systems of thought and action, they have normative force.

Traditional tales exploit ancient memories and knowledge, which storytellers share with the wider public. When narrating, reciting, and enacting them, they rely on powerful images or writings. Stories remain relevant by being transposed to the present and adapted to meet current requirements.

The notion of universally valid sacred or national designs of history was increasingly questioned towards the end of the twentieth century. Today the view prevails that various interpretations of the past are possible.

Torah – remember God’s instructions

Torah (Hebrew, instruction) is the word for the five books of Moses. Jewish tradition holds that God revealed them to him on Mount Sinai. The Torah, which mainly represents a body of law, became the foundation of rabbinic Judaism.

Many commandments start with the key concept: *זָכוֹר* (*sachor*, <remember>). The exhortation to remember refers mainly to God’s deeds throughout history. Observance of Jewish rituals and festivals ensures compliance with the duty to remember. The Sabbath, for instance, is a weekly commemoration day of the Creation and a reminder of the exodus from Egypt. Ritual commemoration allows Jewish people today to develop an awareness of a connection with their forbears. It provides ethical and religious orientation in the present and into the future.

270 Torah scroll; Bern and Solothurn, Switzerland; around 1900; parchment, wood; Jewish Museum Switzerland, on permanent loan since 1984, VI 58328

271 *Yad*, a Torah pointer; Basel, Switzerland; around 1750; silver; Antiquités Ségéal, purchased 1909, VI 2801

Jewish prayer books

The Jewish prayer book for use at festivals (Hebrew *machzor*) contains prayers, liturgical poems, and readings from the Torah for the three pilgrim festivals of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths.

Besides a dedication or its owner’s name, a personal prayer book often contains a note of the *yahrzeit*, the date on which someone dear to the owner died. This book of daily prayers (Hebrew *siddur*) belonged to Babette Levi; the dates of her parents’ deaths are noted in it.

272 Prayer book; printed by Aron Ben Zwi Hirsch in Hamburg, Germany; 1737; used in Solothurn, Switzerland; paper, leather; Jewish Museum Switzerland, on permanent loan since 1984, VI 58387

273 <Prayers in German for each day of the year>; published by J. Lehrbergerer & Co.; Rödelheim, Hesse, Germany; 1870; paper, card; collected by Theo Gantner, donated 1980, VI 53011

The Bible – remember the word of God

The Bible is the sacred literature of Christianity. The Old Testament combines stories, prayers, and prophecies. The New Testament contains letters from the early Apostles that instruct communities in Christian living and remember reveal the teachings of Christ.

The Bible Society of Basel presented this Bible to Emil Stohler and Elise Salathé on the occasion of their marriage on 2 May 1912 in the city’s St. Margarethen Church. Names of family members and important family events are noted on the first pages; together with traces of personal memory such as dried flowers and memorable passages that have been marked, it represents a record of at least 58 years of family history.

274 Luther Bible; published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, Berlin, Germany; 1912; used in Basel, Switzerland; paper, card, dried flowers; collected by Emil Stohler, donated 1976, VI 45997

Christian prayer books

Handwritten prayer books containing pre-formulated prayers for devotion and edification and edification were a precious possession in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were looked after carefully and generally handed down to women.

The name of the author of this book is unknown; in 1805, Luz in Greffstadt is named as subsequent owner.

- 275 Prayer book; Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany; late 18th c.; paper, cardboard; collected by Ernst Gogler, purchased in 1980, VI 52733
- 276 Prayer book and hymnal; Budapest, Hungary; 1879; paper, cowhide, brass; collected by Etelka Liptak, purchased 1989, VI 63260

Pictographs and the development of writing systems

In the course of the evangelization of America, the Bible was translated into indigenous languages; this was typically done based on the Roman alphabet. In parallel, local initiatives arose that sought to convey religious subject matter by means of signs.

Among the Yupik of Alaska, Uyaquq (better known as <Helper Neck>, ca. 1860-1924) developed a system of picture and syllabary writing for his native language. While working for the Moravian Brethren, he took an interest in how ideographs might be used to capture thoughts in such a way that they can always be replicated identically. He documented his processes and reflections at great length. Uyaquq's approach was well known among linguists who made use of his work to re-construct the evolution of complex writing systems.

- 277-278 Two manuscripts with prayers; Juan Martínez; Yapusiri, San Lucas, Chuquisaca, Bolivia; 1980; paper, colour pencil, ink; collected by Valentin Jaquet, BO 1386, BO 1387
- 279 Manuscripts; Uyaquq; Yupik; Alaska, USA; before 1920; paper, ink, pencil; collected by Willy Senft, IVa 2384

Traditional medical knowledge

The use of prayer and healing scrolls in Ethiopia as protection against illness and as a means to treat it has gradually diminished since the 16th century, but they do still play a role in folk culture. In the regions of Amhara and Tigray, these scrolls are traditionally used in equal measure within the contexts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The parchment scrolls are made by specialists with traditional medical and astrological knowledge. Texts are written in Ethiopia's ancient Ge'ez script, and contain lists of the secret names of God, prayers to ward off the evil eye and excerpts from the Bible whose invocations emphasize words of protection and healing.

- 280-282 Three prayer and healing scrolls; Ethiopia; unknown date; parchment, ink, colour; collected by Schultheis 1992, III 26072-74

Koran – remember the revelations of God

The Koran is the holy book of Islam, and for Muslims is the word of God as revealed by the archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Mohammed (ca. 570 – ca. 632). After the Prophet's death, the Koran was initially transmitted orally, but was written down for posterity. Some 25 years after the Prophet's death, at the behest of Uthman, the third caliph, a definitive edition was issued around 650. Even thereafter, the ability to recite the Koran remained important.

Those who have committed it to memory were, and still are, held in high regard, and receive the honorific title *Hāfīz* (guardian).

Small-format Korans are portable and serve private devotional practice. Physical proximity to the sacred word offers protection and wards off evil.

Wooden tablets are found in Koranic schools as an aid for students seeking to memorize a sura of the Koran. Shown on this side of the tablet is written the first sura, *Sūrat al-Fātiha*, <The Opener>.

283 Koran; probably Ottoman Empire; 1226 after the hijra/AD 1811; leather, paper, paint, ink; collected by the Basel Mission, III 26273

284 Koran; Ottoman Empire; before 1888; paper, ink; collected by the Basel Mission, III 26274

285 Koran tablet; Nigeria; unknown date; wood, ink; collector unknown, III 1753

Muslim devotional book

This book's prayers and blessings were recited daily or read jointly by believers from one Monday to the next. It belonged to Sultan Njoya Ibrahim, who from 1887 to 1931 ruled the Bamum kingdom in the Cameroon Grasslands. It can be viewed as a historical testament to cultural appropriation as Njoya converted to Islam after successfully defending his dominant position within the Bamum kingdom with help from the Muslim Fula people.

286 Devotional book from the library of King Njoya; Fumban, Cameroon; before 1910; leather, paper, ink; collected by missionary Martin Göhring of the Basel Mission, III 23006

The teachings of the Buddha

The Golden Light Sutra is one of the oldest texts of Mahayana Buddhism; it extends to more than 260 pages. The extract here refers to a sermon given by the historical Buddha, and contains an imaginary dialogue between him and the Four Heavenly Kings about the necessity of government to be aligned with Buddhist principles. In addition, it contains prayer phrases and instructions for rituals, and is considered to be one of the first esoteric Buddhist texts. This text was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the 5th century. Another Chinese translation, from the 8th century, later circulated throughout East Asia.

287 The Golden Light Sutra; Southern Tibet; 14th/15th c.; paper, indigo, plant-based and mineral colour, gold, silk; collected by Gerd-Wolfgang Essen, IId 14377

Transmitted teachings

The teachings of Buddhism were transmitted orally in the first centuries after the death of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. The canonical literature of Buddhism was developed on the basis of these teachings. It is divided into the discourses of Buddha Shakyamuni, *sūtras*, the writings on monastic discipline, *vinaya*, and the philosophical treatises, *abhidharma*.

The Mahāmoksha Sutra, the discourse on the Great Liberation, is of particular importance in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The text describes the stages of spiritual purification, which are a prerequisite for ending the cycle of rebirth. The text is also recited for the deceased. It then serves to increase their spiritual merits and support them on the path to final enlightenment.

288 Manuscript of the Mahāmoksha Sutra, Sutra of the Great Liberation; Tibet, 13th/14th c.; hand-made paper, block print, pigments, gold dust, silk, brocade; collected by Gerd-Wolfgang Essen, IId 14378

Reference book for ritual specialists

Among the Batak of Northern Sumatra, specialists made accordion-fold manuscripts out of sheets of bark. Written in the *poda* ritual language, they were incomprehensible to non-initiates. Ritual experts and scholars determined how everyday life was before the era of Christianization and Islamization. They were familiar with the world of spirits and gods, were able to ward off or cause harm, and knew which days were favourable for particular undertakings. Their duties included preparing medicines, healing the sick, and ensuring the correct performance of rituals. Traditional knowledge was recorded in bark books. Any aspiring ritual expert learned all he needed to know from an elder. When attending to his duties later, such a manuscript was an essential reference source and memory aid for him.

- 289 Accordion-fold *laklak* bark book of magic; Simalungun-Batak; North Sumatra, Indonesia; 19th or early 20th c.; agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*), resin ink, wood, plant fibre; collected by Paul Wirz 1924, IIC 2160

Small bark book – a souvenir?

When the various Batak clans began to convert to Christianity after the mid-19th century, the paraphernalia used by ritual specialists diminished in importance and value. Early in the 20th century, many bark books therefore found new owners among collectors and travellers. The small format of this book suggests it was made for that market.

As a reflection of renewed interest in local culture, Batak writings are again increasingly being taught, although how bark books were used in the past and how their contents were applied in rituals has now largely been forgotten.

- 290 Accordion-fold *pustaka* bark book of magic; Karo Batak, North Sumatra, Indonesia; 19th or early 20th c.; agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*), resin ink, wood, plant fibre; collected by Werner Friedrich Schneeberger 1976, IIC 18041

Manuscript of unknown content

Palm-leaf manuscripts in Balinese script are made with the dried, pressed, and shaped leaves of the palmyra (lontar) palm. A knife is used to scratch letters and figures on them; a mixture of oil and lampblack is then applied to make them visible. Loose leaves are bound together to form a book known as a lontar manuscript. Such manuscripts are found in Bali for all of life's important aspects. It is not always known why former owners disposed of their manuscripts, whose origins, age, and contents were sometimes forgotten when they became museum pieces.

- 291 Lontar manuscript of unknown contents; Bali, Indonesia; date unknown; leaf of the palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*), wood, vegetable fibres, coin; collected by Urs Ramseyer 1982, IIC 21129

Remembering and communicating medical knowledge

There are two types of Balinese medical manuscripts: *usada* contain rules of conduct, formulas, and medicinal products, and are more practical in nature. *Tutur* contain teachings, theories, and commentaries; they are more theoretical in nature. While *usada* are accessible to everyone, only specialists understand *tutur*. In the hands of non-specialists, they can be misunderstood, which can cause harm. When correctly stored and used, such manuscripts survive for several centuries. Before a manuscript disintegrates, it is usually copied. Not only familiarity with the script, but knowledge of the languages used – besides high Balinese, Kawi (Old Javanese) and Sanskrit – ensured that only a select few had access to these manuscripts

and their knowledge. The production of lontar manuscripts using Balinese script is occasionally taught in schools today to secure the survival of Balinese culture, which many Balinese feel is threatened by the forces of westernization and modernization.

292 Lontar manuscript *lontar jimat pangijeng*; Nyoman Kajanan Nurati; Tenganan Pegeringsingan, Bali, Indonesia; 1996; leaf of the palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*), wood, vegetable fibres, coin; collected by Nyoman Kajanan Nurati 1998, IIc 21481

A tale of hero worship

Pabuji is the hero in a traditional tale from Rajasthan where nomadic groups worship him as a god. Here he is shown in the centre of the picture.

The story of the rivalry between Pabuji's kinsman Rathor and his adversary Jindrav Khici is portrayed here. The feud between their families ends with Pabuji's victory and Jindrav being beheaded. Pabuji then retires to lead the life of an ascetic. Recalling the *Ramayana*, this story traces its origins to the fourteenth century.

Its narrators also function as priests of Pabuji the god. During performances, their narrative cloth functions as a mobile shrine. The performance itself represents a ritual offering to the god. When not in use as part of a performance, the cloth is treated like a house altar at which offerings are made.

293 Pabuji; Bhilwara District, Rajasthan, India; first half of 20th c.; cotton, synthetic and natural colours; collected by Josef Remigius Belmont, donated 1980; IIa 7806

Illustrations from the Ramayana

Created by the Indian artist Sugandha Iyer, these images belong to a series of works that draws on one of India's epic poems, the *Ramayana*. It is held to be one of the great traditional texts of Hinduism – a reading that is not without controversy as these epic poems were – and continue to be – co-opted in the interests of Hindu nationalistic politics.

The individual books of the *Ramayana* were presumably created between 500 and 100 BC, and the poet Maharishi Vālmiki is believed to have written them down. The *Ramayana* describes life in the Indian subcontinent around 1000 BC. In addition, it contains philosophical deliberations on Hindu ethics that influence life and education in India to this day. The work of Sugandha Iyer shows how traditional narratives can be appropriated, re-interpreted, and integrated into art and daily life in the present.

The epic poem describes the life of Prince Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu. King Dasharatha of Kosala has three wives, but for a long time has no successor. Only after making sacrifices to the gods are four sons born to him: Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna. The sage Vishvamitra takes charge of the education of Rama and Lakshmana, and takes them both to the court of Prince Janaka. When Rama becomes the first to lift and string the celestial bow, he is given the hand of Princess Sita. Following a plot by his stepmother, Rama loses his claim to the throne, and together with his wife and his brother Lakshmana spends 14 years in exile. During this time, Sita is abducted to Lanka, capital of the demon king Ravana, but she is freed with the help of Hanuman, the monkey-god and general. After further trials and tribulations, Rama is eventually crowned King of Kosala.

294 The *Ramayana* is the eventful story of Rama, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, his wife Sita, and his brother Lakshmana

295 Rama wins the bow contest and weds Sita

296 Rama meets the Brahman Prashu Rama

- 297 Rama's stepmother follows bad advice from her servant; King Dasharatha regrets having to send Rama away
- 298 Rama leaves the palace together with Sita and Lakshmana; en route to the forest, they must cross a river; Rama befriends Guta the boatman, who helps them
- 299 King Dasharatha's wives mourn at his bedside; Bharata is furious at his mother's intrigues
- 300 Bharata goes in search of his half-brother Rama in his forest exile
- 301 The demon king Ravana abducts Sita; Rama bemoans the loss of his wife
- 302 Rama and Lakshmana meet the ascetic Shabari, and Rama gives her his divine blessing
- 303 Rama meets the monkey-god and general Hanuman
- 304 Ravana's ally Vali is killed; Hanuman crosses the ocean and reaches Lanka
- 305 Hanuman searching for Sita in the Ashoka forest; Hanuman gives Sita a ring from Rama
- 306 Hanuman is discovered and taken to the demon king Ravana
- 307 As he flees, Hanuman sets fire to Lanka; on his return, Rama gives him a ring in thanks
- 308 Monkeys and bears build a bridge across the sea to Lanka
- 309 The giant Kumbhakarna awakens to help Ravana
- 310 Ravana perishes
- 311 As a sign of her loyalty, Sita submits to an ordeal by fire
- 312 In a chariot decorated with flowers, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana make their way across the river back to Ayodhya
- 313 Rama is crowned king
- Illustrations; Sugandha Iyer; Pune, Maharashtra, India; 1980s; paper, watercolours; gift of the artist in 1991, Ila 10553, Ila10557-62, Ila 10564, Ila 10567, Ila 10567-77

Narrative shrines

Narrative shrines (*kavad*) are part of a 400-year-old oral tradition of Rajasthan in north-western India. Used by itinerant storytellers, these artefacts are portable narrative shrines that illustrate episodes from the epic poems of the Mahabharata or the Ramayana, one of many stories about the god Vishnu, or stories about local sages or historical events.

Depicted on the outside wings are protector spirits and the story's setting. As the shrine is opened up, it reveals new episodes of its story on which the storyteller elaborates. Only at the end is the holiest part revealed, the shrine inside that contains the image of one or several deities. Storytellers have exhaustive knowledge of Hindu mythology and its associated stories that serve to hand down to future generations the history and genealogy of each local community.

- 314 Narrative shrine; Mewar, Rajasthan, India; late 20th c.; wood, painted and varnished, metal; Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, donated 2012, Ila 11492

Epic Motifs

Embroidered *chamba rumali* handkerchiefs have been very popular since the 17th century. Favoured as offerings and wedding presents, their motifs are derived from the epics of the Mahabharata, Ramayana, and other Hindu writings. The two examples here reveal a contemporary take on a traditional form that remains a feature of people's lives.

In the midst of devotees sit Shiva and Parvati; to their right stand their son, elephant-headed Ganesh, and the four-headed god Brahma. The second example shows Krishna dancing with cowgirls in the village where he grew up. Krishna seduces them with his flute playing. To ensure that none feels neglected, the god replicates himself. The concept of *bhakti* refers to a

mystical loving devotion to a supreme deity, and the women's love of the god Krishna is emblematic of it.

315 *chamba rumal*; Lahore, Pakistan; mid-20th c.; cotton, silk; Ida Jann, purchased 1971, IIA 5443

316 *chamba rumal*; Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, India; early 20th c.; cotton, silk; collected by B.N. Aryan, purchased 1984, IIA 8159

5 Memory politics

Different interest groups vie with one another as they seek to interpret history and how to commemorate it. As part of the process of decolonization, many forms of commemoration evolved around the world: the end of the Cold War, of dictatorships in Latin America, and of apartheid in South Africa, for instance, intensified examination of the past. Besides criticism of official representations of history, commemoration of the victims came to the fore. The focus now lies more on experiences and events that should not be repressed, denied, and forgotten.

Wide sections of society adopted forms of media that previously had been available mainly to elites. Women's movements, subaltern groups, and minorities created discourses that ran counter to official narratives. On fabrics, posters, and paintings, activists from different social strata recorded national narratives and days of remembrance as well as criticism of dictators and the abuse of state power. Their activities show how diverse and contradictory recollections find expression within a society's memory. They also reveal how contemporary interests appropriate history for their own purposes.

Political multivocality

In the 1980s and 1990s, decades-long dictatorships and civil wars came to an end, making possible major political changes in Latin America. Across political and social spectrums, posters were an important element in public communication. As they struggled against apparatuses of state, political parties, social movements, and churches called for democratic reforms, equitable access to resources, and human rights to be observed. To this day, indigenous organizations still have to push for recognition of their rights, identities, and languages in new constitutions. Across Latin America in 1992, resistance to the quincentenary celebrations of Columbus's so-called discovery of America represented a historic event that galvanized indigenous and Afroamerican movements as well as church and social organizations. Their posters are a record of the continent's social movements and remind us that their concerns remain as topical as ever.

317 FEDEFAM; <Life and dignity for the people of Chile>; Chile; date unknown; IVc 27175

318 <Amnesty>; Brazil; 1984; IVc 27099

319 Comité de Unidad Campesina; <1978-1988: Ten years of peasant struggle in Guatemala>; Guatemala; 1988; IVb 6603

320 <Migrants' Day>; Brazil, 1984; IVc 27103

321 CONTAG et al. <Decent Wage Campaign 1988>; Brazil; 1988; IVc 27145

322 <1st Andean Food Summit: We all have to feed ourselves. Actions for change and justice>; Peru; 1986; IVc 27269

323 IDMA; <Cubramos de Bosques y praderas los suelos, hasta hacer agradable y permanente la vida del hombre/Let us cover the land with forests and meadows until people's lives are pleasant and stable>; Peru; 1985; IVc 27261

- 324 CIMI, CNBB; <Constitutional Rights for Indigenous Peoples>; Brazil; 1987; IVc 27139
- 325 FMLN-COMIN; <The colour of blood is never forgotten. We fight to win>; San Salvador; 1984; IVb 6598
- 326 FEDEFAM; <Let us build a Latin America where no one disappears>; Chile; 1985; IVc 27209
- 327 CONTAG et al.; <Land Reform Now!>; Brazil; ca. 1984; IVc 27116
- 328 CONAIE; <National Mobilization>; Ecuador; 1989; IVc 27194
- 329 <Democracy works when women are involved. International Women's Day>; Chile; 1989; IVc 27174
- 330 Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos; <Where are they? Let us defend life; no to people disappearing>; Peru; date unknown; IVc 27197
- 331 JOC-ACO-Pastoral Operária; <May Day and the 40-hour-week. A century of struggle to make history>; Brazil; 1986; IVc 27158
- 332 ANUC et al.; <Self-Discovery of America 500 years of peasant-indigenous resistance 1492-1992>; Colombia; IVc 27195
- 333 Sindicato dos Bancários SP; <13th May? Black residents of Rio de Janeiro, all with identity papers, arrested by the Military Police in 1982. The scene recalls the era of slavery in 19th-century Brazil>; Brazil; 1982; IVc 27105
- 334 Campanha Nacional Ceará <Land Reform Now!>; Brazil; 1986; IVc 27156
- 335 Campaña por la Expresión Ciudadana; <Organized, we can determine the nature of our democracy>; Paraguay; 1990; IVc 27207
- 336 FENOC et al.; <Peasants and Indigenous Peoples' First Joint Meeting. For bread, land, and freedom: Land reform under the control of peasants>; Ecuador; 1983; IVc 27282
- 337 CONAIE; <Land, Culture, Freedom>; Ecuador, 1989; IVc 27288
- 338 Dirección de Divulgación y Prensa Junta de Gobierno de Reconstrucción Nacional; <FSLN 1927 - 1981: And the thousands of heroes and martyrs who have fallen for national liberation, the defence and consolidation of the Sandinista revolution>; Nicaragua; 1981; IVb 6604
- 339 <Archbishop Oscar Romero: I am at the service of the people's organizations>; El Salvador; 1984; IVb 6605
- 340 GAM; <Those who die for the sake of life cannot be called dead>; Guatemala; 1985; IVb 6602
- 341 CONAIE et al.; <500 years of indigenous resistance>; Ecuador; 1992; IVc 27216
- 342 Centro Pastoral da Comunicação et al.; <Black: 100 years of struggle>, Brazil, date unknown; IVc 27112
- 343 EAPS; <We want them alive!>; Guatemala; date unknown; IVb 6627
- 344 UPICM-PM; <A right to stay in our neighbourhood>; Mexico; ca. 1986; IVb 6638
- 345 ECOS; <We are always minding other people's lives ; let's now mind our own>, Brazil; 1980s; IVc 27128
- 346 ACAFADE; <Truth and Justice for disappeared prisoners. Trials and punishment for the guilty>; Guatemala; 1986; IVb 6620
- All posters; paper, colour printing; donated by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser 2019

Independence and state violence

Haitian artists depict historical events that through stories are present in the nation's collective memory, and are represented in the public realm through monuments. Their paintings are reminders of the slave rebellion and the country's declaration of independence. Haiti is considered the first independent Latin American nation founded by former slaves. Two decisive events during the Haitian Revolution were the pyrrhic victory of the French at Crête-à-Pierrot, as depicted by J. Saint Hilaire, and the last battle at Vertières, as depicted by Al Gabriel.

Through socially critical paintings, however, Haitian artists also draw attention to more contemporary issues such as arbitrary police violence and torture during the dictatorships of the Duvalier family (1957-1986), and inequalities in the country.

- 347 Painting; Al Gabriel; <The Heroes of Vertières>; Haiti; date unknown; tempera on fibreboard; donated by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser 2019, IVc 27045
- 348 Painting; J. Saint Hilaire; <The Battle of Crête-à-Pierrot>; Haiti; ca. 1990; watercolour (?) on fibreboard; donated by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser 2019, IVc 27005
- 349 Painting; Julien Valery; <Terror and National Mourning>; Haiti; 1987; oil on fibreboard; donated by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser 2019, IVc 27024
- 350 Painting; Ossey Dubic; <Rural police>; Haiti; 1967-1971; watercolour (?) on fibreboard; donated by Heinrich and Marlyse Thommen-Strasser 2019, IVc 26954

The conquest of Abyssinia

As he sought to connect the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland after his victory over Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia), which would allow him to declare a second Roman Empire, Benito Mussolini decided to wage war in the Horn of Africa in 1935. The region considers the war to be a key event in an era shaped by the violence of global conflict, yet to this day it barely registers in Europe's collective memory. The Italians deployed large-scale bombing and mustard gas against soldiers and civilians alike. Even Red Cross and Red Crescent field hospitals were attacked in a conflict that bore the traits of <total war>. In Ethiopia and internationally, it is nowadays interpreted by historians as a bloody precursor to World War II. There are a number of reasons why this war has been forgotten in Europe: on the one hand, Europe has not really taken an interest in victims from the Global South, especially not when they were associated with Europe's own thirst for expansion; on the other hand, the atrocities that followed in Europe a short time later seemed themselves so terrible that they suppressed all memory of what had gone before.

- 351 Painting <War against Italy>; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; ca. 1935/36; wood, canvas, paint; collected by Walther Staehelin, III 25499

National legend

The legend of the Queen of Sheba is a popular subject in Ethiopian art. It has been reproduced countless times, almost always as a story told in pictures, with different episodes of the narrative shown in scenes that are individually framed. According to oral tradition and written records, the Queen of Sheba came from Ethiopia. After visiting King Solomon in Jerusalem and offering him many gifts, she returned home pregnant. She gave birth to a son whom she named Menelik. As a young man, he made the journey to Jerusalem to see his father King Solomon, who named him King Menelik I of Ethiopia. The story served after the 13th century to legitimize Ethiopia's royal dynasty. It was not until the rule of Menelik II from 1889 to 1913, however, that the first illustrations of the legend appeared.

- 352 Painting, <The Story of the Queen of Sheba>; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; ca. 1935/36; wood, canvas, paint; collected by Walther Staehelin, III 25500

Self-image of the state

This painting depicts scenes from the Meskel Ceremony that the Ethiopian Orthodox church celebrates annually in September. It recalls the role played by Saint Helen in the Finding of the True Cross. Thousands attend this ceremony in Addis Ababa each year.

The topmost image shows the seated Emperor Haile Selassie surrounded by family members, senior clergy, and civil servants. The painting's central section depicts priests making music and dancing in celebration during this major church festival. The painting's bottom section

shows a regiment of soldiers. The monarchy, the church, and the military here represent the pillars of the Ethiopian state's self-image.

353 Painting of the <Meskel Ceremony>; Ethiopia; around 1932; wood, canvas, paint; collected by Rudolf Geigy 1953, III 12850

Establishing identity

These are the portraits of all 18 rulers of the Bamum in the Cameroon Grasslands. The list is read from top left to bottom right, starting with the first ruler, Nchare Yen, who founded the Kingdom of Bamum in 1394, and ending with Sultan Seidu Njimoluh Njoya, who was crowned in 1933. The penultimate ruler listed is Ibrahim Njoya, probably the head of the Bamum who is best known to Europeans. He ruled from 1887 to 1931, and helped to promote and revive the culture of the Bamum. When his kingdom was incorporated into the German Empire in the early 20th century, Njoya skilfully integrated new ideas, media, and technology into the daily routines of his court. He introduced innovations such as writing and drawing to reinforce the identity of the Bamum people.

354 List of the Rulers of the Bamum; Fumban, Cameroon; date unknown; paper, pencil, colour pencil, ink; collected by Peter His, III 27528

West African heroes

The ten men portrayed here played important roles in the history of Mali and West Africa. They are political and spiritual leaders who set themselves against European colonial and imperial power generally, and French influences expressions of it in particular. To this day, custodians of history and family genealogies (in Bamanankan *jeliw*) celebrate them in epic poems that ensure the memory of these men's lives and deeds is kept alive.

The first portrait is that of Soundiata Keita. In the early 13th century, he was the founder and first ruler of the powerful Kingdom of Mali; at its height, it extended across a large part of what is now West Africa. Soundiata Keita plays an important role in Mali's culture of remembrance as he represents the country's former greatness and significance as a centre of commerce, culture, and science in West Africa. The *Epic of Sundiata* is a poem that transmits his story into the present day.

The third portrait from the left is that of El-Hadj Omar Tall (ca. 1794-1864). He was an influential political and military leader in West Africa, and was also a senior Muslim scholar in the Tijaniyyah brotherhood. In 1852, he called for *jihad* against unbelievers (including Muslims who did not accept his strict interpretation of Islam) and Europeans, particularly the French.

355 <Des héros africains> wall hanging; Bamako, Mali; before 1987; cotton fabric; collected by Bernhard Gardi 1987, III 24927

Bearers of memory

The photographs and film excerpts shown here are of contemporary *jeliw* whose songs and recitatives commemorate the figures of Soundiata Keita and El-Hadj Omar Tall.

356 Clip 1: <Simbo>; Bintan Kouyaté, Adama Diabaté; Kela, Mali; Video 10:48 min; courtesy of Bintan Kouyaté and Adama Diabaté, Kela; audio and visual recordings Michael Fontana, Basel; audio mastering Alex Buess, Basel © B. Kouyaté, A. Diabaté and M. Fontana, 2020
Clip 2: <Taara>; Bala Njie; Bansang, Gambia; Video 9:42 min (excerpt from a 43:02 minute work); In memoriam Bala Njie, who disappeared 7.11.2019; courtesy of the Njie family, Bansang; audio and

Commemorative cloths

The first commemorative cloths appeared in the late 1920s, and became ever more important with the growth of Africa's independence movements. Politicians in newly formed states were adept at tapping into Africans' great fondness for fabrics, which served to promote politicians' programmes and new national identities alike. While the first such fabrics were still imported from Europe, production of the bulk of them shifted to Africa itself during the 1960s. Today to a large extent, they are also made in China.

Commemorative cloths are usually printed on one side only, and are commissioned for various occasions such as weddings, christenings, funerals, company anniversaries, conferences, or anniversaries of events in history. Their purpose is to boost political campaigns and to honour politicians, the clergy, or celebrities. Women usually wrap a piece of commemorative fabric around their waist or have it made into a tailored garment. Once an event is past, the piece of fabric can either still be worn or put away, and as such becomes part of an individual's archive of remembered moments.

Politicians are responsible for commissioning well over half of commemorative cloths, which therefore tend to reflect the ideas and viewpoints of ruling elites. How and in which context a piece of fabric is worn can be interpreted as a comment on current affairs, however. Women can express their dissatisfaction with a president by wearing a piece of commemorative cloth inside out and upside down, or by wearing it in such a way that they can well and truly park their buttocks on the presidential face!

- 357 Cloth to commemorate the 4th UNFM congress to combat growing desertification; Bamako, Mali; 1987; cotton fabric; collected by Bernhard Gardi 1987, III 24928
- 358 Cloth to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the BMCD Bank; Bamako, Mali; 1986; cotton fabric; collected by Bernhard Gardi 1987, III 24931
- 359 Cloth to commemorate Etienne Gnassingbe Eyadema; Togo; 1987; cotton fabric; collected by Wolfgang Bender 1997, III 26975
- 360 Cloth to commemorate International Women's Day; Guinea; 1986; cotton fabric; collected by Bernhard Gardi 1989, III 25514
- 361 Cloth to commemorate the 26th anniversary of Malian independence; Bamako, Mali; 1986; cotton fabric; collected by Bernhard Gardi 1987, III 24934
- 362 Cloth to commemorate Josef-Désiré Mobutu; Democratic Republic of the Congo; date unknown; cotton fabric; collected by Wolfgang Bender 1997, III 26971
- 363 Cloth to commemorate the 13th France-Africa summit; Lomé, Togo; 1986; cotton fabric; collected by Wolfgang Bender 1997, III 26974
- 364 Cloth to commemorate Samuel Doe; Liberia; 1986; cotton fabric; collected by Wolfgang Bender 1997, III 26976
- 365 Cloth to commemorate the Anti-Apartheid movement; Africa; date unknown; cotton fabric; collected by Wolfgang Bender 1997, III 26980

Da Gamma Textiles began to make so-called *shweshwe* textiles in South Africa in 1982. Besides cloth with geometric patterns, Da Gamma has regularly produced special-edition commemorative cloths such as the one honouring Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of South Africa. For the design of its fabric, Da Gamma chose the same portrait photograph of Mandela that was used on his election posters during the presidential election campaign. It has become an iconic image: as the president leading South Africa into a new era, this is how Nelson Mandela became imprinted in our visual memory.

6 Lived history

Our perception and experience make us all witnesses to contemporary events. In our dual role of agent and observer, we participate in the making of history.

Quarrels and wars, refugees and migrants, human, civic, and women's rights, global warming and conservation of the environment, the concept of a universal basic income, and a pandemic are some of the experiences we have shared in the recent past. Accounts by those who were involved, survived, or were victims make that history affecting for us and real.

Personal memories of historic moments, events, and developments are important sources of historical research. Both the role of the individual as a repository of memory and the uniqueness of personal perception are expressed in contemporary testimonies. The subjective experiences they describe should always be considered in the context of affiliation to a particular group and its norms and values, however.

7 Commemoration of the dead

Commemoration of the dead is the first stage of remembering and forgetting. Death reminds us of the transience of life and memory. Precisely because death and loss are so painful, commemoration becomes significant for the living.

In the South American lowlands, the dead are to be appeased; otherwise their spirits would pose a threat to the life of the community. Traces of their life need to be effaced to enable them to continue to their final destination.

Commemoration of the dead as expressed in various Christian practices seeks to keep alive the names and significance of those who have passed away, and to prevent them from being forgotten, which is felt to resemble a second death. The relationship with the deceased is not only cultivated within the family circle, but also by means of rituals and days of collective commemoration. In German-speaking Europe, the transience of life and mortality are the focus on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, days on which in Mexico families invite their dead to join them in cheerful celebration.

Protection from the spirits of the dead

To ward off the spirits of the dead, the Matsigenka people of Amazonia carved anthropomorphic wooden figures (*ko'roshi*). They were intended to protect the community of the living from the return and influence of the dead. The figures were installed along paths to settlements or planted areas.

According to Matsigenka notions, shared by many societies in the Amazonian Lowlands, the spirits of the dead are dangerous. To allow them to find their way to another world, traces of their life need to be effaced. Not only are the bodies of the deceased interred; their personal belongings are removed, burned and buried too. The names of the deceased are <forgotten>; no mention is made of them during a lengthy period of mourning. If possible, the closest

relatives settle elsewhere. These practices are intended to bring peace to the deceased and to help the living overcome their grief.

367-369 Three guardian figures; Roberto and Zaila Leonidas; Matsiguenga; Tigonpinia, Rio Urubamba, Peru; 1978; balsa wood, charcoal, annatto; collected by Gerhard Baer, IVc 21760-62

Presence of those who are absent

As an enduring product of the human body, hair once served as a memento of loved ones, particularly in 19th-century Europe. Hair art was used in images that were hung on walls as a reminder of those who were absent. On the one hand, these images were given as a token of love, on the other, they served as a memento of the deceased.

In the context of keeping the deceased persons' memory alive, weeping willows, tombstones, and other Christian symbols often occurred, intended to comfort relatives in their sorrow.

370 Hair art; <Barbara (†1853) and Jac. Kasp. Joseph Fluder (†1860)> with symbols representing faith, hope, and love; Adligenswil, Lucerne, Switzerland; 1860; human hair, fabric, beads, wood, glass; collected by Jakob Lörch, donated 1910, VI 3734

371 Hair art; <You are in my thoughts. Am I in yours? A.C.>; Basel, Switzerland; around 1880; human hair, glass, wood; collected by Rudolf Schiess, purchased 1948, VI 18623

372 Hair art; <M.G. My soul is calm for God, my helper>; Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland; around 1870; human hair, glass, wood; collected by Isidoro Pellegrini, purchased 1949, VI 18730

373 Hair art; <In memory of my late mother>; Basel, Switzerland; before 1971; human hair, wood, cardboard, glass, metal; collected by Karl Wall, purchased 1971, VI 38648

374 Hair art; <A keepsake>; Basel, Switzerland; before 1973; human hair, glass, wood; collected by A. Muster, purchased 1973, VI 41896

375 Hair art with a child's photograph; Basel, Switzerland; before 1980; human hair, glass, paper, fabric, wood; from the estate of Arnold Maserey, Paul Hugger, purchased 1980, VI 52919

376 Commemoration of the dead; <Beloved parents Marie and Henri Morel 1901, 1906>; Switzerland; around 1906; photographs, human hair, glass, paper; collected by Alwin Seiler, purchased 1989, VI 62805

377 Hair art; <In memoriam Joseph Anton Gschwend>; Zurich, Switzerland; 1854; human hair, paper, wood, glass; collector unknown, VI 63331

Immortalized names

In the Christian commemorative tradition, the deceased are remembered by means of gravestones, crosses, and commemorative plaques. Cemeteries contain monuments made of durable material such as stone or metal. Inscriptions on them perpetuate names and dates of birth and death. Crosses recall Jesus Christ whose Resurrection, the faithful believe, transcended the death.

378 Cross for a grave; central Switzerland; 18th c.; wrought iron, stone; Historisches Museum Basel, on permanent loan since 1976, HM 1945.0053

379 Grave cross; Switzerland; around 1780; wrought iron, wood; Historisches Museum Basel, on loan since 1976, HM 1894.0432.02

380 Cross for the grave of father and son Krummenacher; Sachseln, Obwalden, Switzerland; 18th c.; sheet iron; collected by Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, donated 1905, VI 413

381 Grave plate; Bavaria, Germany; 1824; sheet iron; collected by Max Wydler, purchased 1963, VI 30358

382 Cross for the grave of Barbara Huber, 1828-1850; central Switzerland; 1850; sheet iron; collected by Jakob Lörch, purchased 1969, VI 36511

- 383 Cross for a grave; Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria; 1817; iron; collected by Hardy Glogg, purchased 1917, VI 39511
- 384 Grave slab for Anneli Bannwart, 1950-53; Willisau, Lucerne, Switzerland; 1953; marble; collected by Anton Bannwart, purchased 1986, VI 60502
- 385 Epitaph of Magdalena Gantner, 1852-1937; Flums, St. Gallen, Switzerland; 1937; marble; collector unknown, VI 71539

Commemorating the dead

Until late in the 19th century in the Canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden, the plank on which the body of a deceased person had been laid out was often painted and inscribed. To commemorate the deceased, such planks were attached to the outside walls of homes where the elements caused them to fade over time; they were removed when a new owner moved in.

- 386 Funeral plank of Maria Anna Jos. Buob, 1810-1856; Appenzell Innerrhoden, Switzerland; 1856; wood; collected by Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, donated 1904, VI 12
- 387 Funeral plank of a child; Appenzell Innerrhoden, Switzerland; around 1850; wood; collected by Alfred Geiger, donated 1904, VI 248
- 388 Funeral plank of Maria Franziska Dörig, 1825-1852; Brülisau, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Switzerland; 1852; wood; collected by Erwin Burckhardt, purchased 1941, VI 16067

The living and the dead reunited

All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in Mexico are colourful and joyous celebrations when families reunite with their deceased relatives and loved ones. On 1st November, the souls of children are the first to return, while on the 2nd November it is adults whose memory is commemorated. To welcome the souls of the departed at home, families set up altars and tables with offerings of flowers, candles, and cut-paper silhouettes. Skeletons and skulls made of papier mâché, clay or sugar are also used. They are made with a good dose of irony and social criticism; the figures are shown at different stages of life and engaged in various daily activities. Catrina, a wealthy and elegant lady, is perhaps the most famous icon of Day of the Dead celebrations. To make them feel welcome, the dead are offered their favourite dishes and personal possessions. To take their leave of the dead, families make their way to cemeteries where they eat, drink, make music, and dance until midnight when the dead must again depart. The memory of those who have gone is thus kept alive for another year.

- 389 Skeleton with a bouquet; J. H. Sánchez; Mexico City, Mexico; 1994; ceramic, wire; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 15853
- 390 Catrina; J. H. Sánchez; Mexico City, Mexico; 1994; papier mâché, fabric, ink, paint; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 15854
- 391 La Llorona; J. H. Sánchez; Mexico City, Mexico; 1994; ceramic, wax, paint; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 15855
- 392 Skeleton with cacti and flowers; Mexico; around 1995; wire, papier mâché, tinfoil; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH UFO-Mexico 005
- 393 Bride and groom cycling; Mexico; around 1995; wire, papier mâché, tinfoil, fabric, paint; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH UFO-Mexico 006
- 394 Catrina; Mexico; around 2008; paper, ink, lace, acrylic paint; collected by Franziska Jenni, donated 2011, IVb 5842
- 395-399 Mariachi ensemble of flute, two violins, clarinet and singer; Mexico City, Mexico; around 1972; papier mâché, wood, paint; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 9108-9112
- 400 Charro horseman, revolutionary; Mexico City, Mexico; before 1996; papier mâché, paint, paper, wood, tin; collected by Robert and Cécile Hiltbrand-Grimmeisen, RH 16137