

# Maya Mobile

Art and Trade of Great Civilizations  
from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance



Curriculum Materials  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

# Maya Mobile

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## **Art and Trade of Great Civilizations from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance**

**T**HESE CURRICULUM MATERIALS ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE seventh-grade students who participate in the Maya Mobile program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). The program is comprised of presentations, hands-on art experiences in the Maya Mobile, and a visit at the museum to tour the related permanent collections with museum educators. These materials will enhance the students' experience and supplement your class study of medieval and early modern cultures throughout the school year.

The curriculum materials were developed in alignment with seventh grade California State Content Standards for History-Social Science, Visual Arts, and English-Language Arts. They are designed for classroom use and intended to stimulate critical thinking and creative expression as students discover the art of medieval and early modern cultures and make valuable connections to their own cultures and experiences.

Through this program, students will explore the significance of trade among civilizations and the resulting exchange of ideas, beliefs, goods, and technologies as manifested in works of art. This guide includes transparencies or color reproductions of five objects from LACMA's collections. One object from the Maya civilization is the foundation for the study of the theme of the exchange of goods and ideas. Examples of works from China, Islamic lands, and early modern Europe demonstrate the growth of interactions among civilizations. They also reveal the importance of artistic production as products of exchange and developing technologies as well as representations of religious beliefs and political, philosophical, and scientific ideas. Included are descriptions of the objects along with questions and activities that may be used in the classroom. You will also find timelines and a list of related resources.

# Maya Mobile

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## Art and Trade of Great Civilizations from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance

**T**HE ARTISTIC PRODUCTION OF THE CULTURES REPRESENTED IN THIS CURRICULUM reveals the growth of exchange among civilizations. As the foundation of the curriculum, the Maya object described in this booklet demonstrates how the artistic production of a culture functions as a product for exchange, as a type of social currency given and received to promote political and social relationships, and as a means of conveying, reinforcing, and reflecting beliefs and values.

- *How do beliefs and new ideas circulate in the world today? What are the systems that support the exchange of goods and ideas? How is this exchange reflected in our culture?*
- *What types of objects do you think best communicate beliefs and ideas? How do they communicate?*
- *When you think about trade, what types of objects come to mind? How do art objects fit into a discussion of the exchange of goods and ideas? Discuss the different ways that a work of art might communicate the beliefs and ideals of the culture it represents.*

The curriculum materials include suggested questions and activities to assist students in making discoveries about the artworks, as well as historical and technical information for the classroom teacher. As students make discoveries through their experiences on the Maya Mobile and in the museum, they are encouraged to think about and discuss the similarities and differences among the objects and the cultures they represent.

# The Maya

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**T**HE MAYA OCCUPIED THE AREA REFERRED TO AS southern Mesoamerica, an area that today comprises Guatemala, Belize, southern Mexico, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. The Americas, and thus the Maya, were isolated from the major civilizations of Europe, Africa, and Asia until Europeans arrived in the late 1400s. The Maya are usually characterized as an ancient civilization; however, there are more than six million Maya people currently living throughout Mexico and Central America. Despite its isolation from the other cultures discussed in this curriculum, Maya culture is characterized by the communication of ideas and beliefs through systems of exchange throughout Mesoamerica. Maya civilization was made up of a number of separate kingdoms known as city-states that developed along rivers or *cenotes*, which are formed when fresh water seeps into collapsed layers of limestone. Different city-states were dominant at different times. The city-states were the center of social, economic, and political pursuits. The Maya cleared routes through jungles and swamps and used canoe travel to connect distant city-states and create extensive trade networks. Columbus's son Diego encountered Maya traders traveling by canoe along the Caribbean coast in the early 1500s.

Religion was the foundation of the culture, and homage was paid to the gods and ancestors through ritual practices. Some Maya achievements include the construction of huge stone temples and astronomical observatories, the development of sophisticated calendars, and the use of a base 20 mathematics system that included the use of the concept of zero. With zero, Maya mathematicians and astronomers were able to predict the cycles of the five visible planets as well as lunar and solar eclipses. The concept also allowed for the development of geometry necessary for the building of huge temple pyramids.

During the era known as the Classic period (A.D. 250–900), the civilization flourished and the Maya excelled in the arts. The socio-political structure of the civilization was hierarchical and lineage-based. The ruling elite sponsored public and private rituals. The artistic production at different sites varied with their relative socio-political power. At sites such as Tikal and Palenque, the development of fine ceramic pottery and monumental architecture inspired allies and rival neighbors to copy their style. There are discernable regional differences in Maya art, but despite such differences, the Maya's shared beliefs and practices were communicated and reinforced by their artistic production.



# Chocolate Bowl

**T**HIS CHOCOLATE BOWL IS FROM THE REGION OF Tikal, Guatemala. It is an example of ceramic ware common among the Maya elite of the Classic period, and vessels like this were used as high-status serving vessels for ceremonial feasts. Production of low-fire slip painted pottery (slip paint is made of a mixture of finely ground pigment, clay, and water) of this quality and detail required technical skill. The primary aesthetic medium of the Classic Maya was painting, and pictorial polychrome pottery serves as the enduring example of this medium. The Maya palette included variations of black, white, red, earth tones, and a color known as "Maya blue."

This vessel is decorated with hieroglyphs, which were indicators that its owner was a person of high status. Maya hieroglyphs are read from left to right and, on limestone monuments, from top to bottom. Each picture symbol represents an idea, word, or syllable, and thus words can be written with different forms. Writing was done by scribes, members of the upper class who were educated in mathematics, calendrical computation, history, mythology, religion, and ritual as well as the arts. In Maya society, vessel painting was a revered activity. The scribe and the artist were one and the same—no distinction was made between painting and writing, since both were accomplished with a brush.

- *Look at the hieroglyphs on the chocolate bowl. Do you recognize any of the shapes that make up the glyphs? Are there any shapes that suggest a specific meaning? How are the hieroglyphs different from our writing system? Which do you think might be more difficult to learn and understand? Why?*

Ceramic vessels were often named for the type of substance they held. The function of this bowl is made clear by the text written around its rim, which indicates the vessel was intended to hold cacao (or chocolate) drink.

Chocolate was important to the Maya, who drank it on ceremonial and social occasions. Cacao (the bean that forms the basis of chocolate) was sought-after by the royal courts of Mesoamerica; it also functioned as a currency.

Cacao grows well only in the most humid conditions, prospering mainly outside of the lowland Maya heartland. Cacao production took place on the slopes of the Pacific coast, and major sources were located in what is now the Mexican region of Tabasco or points further west. The god known as God L, who was often depicted carrying a merchant's bundle (or back-rack) containing highly valued objects such as quetzal feathers, turquoise, or obsidian, is associated with the southern Gulf Coast region, an important place of cacao production and trade.

- *What are some of the most valuable and sought-after goods in our contemporary system of trade? Why are certain goods more valuable than others? Can you think of any goods that are important in the rituals and social practices of your culture?*

The text on this vessel also names its owner. The presence of the name of the vessel's owner suggests that the bowl may have served as a funerary offering or as a royal gift in addition to its use for serving cacao on ceremonial occasions. Ceramic vessels like this one were also presented by the elites of one city to nobles from another city in order to establish and maintain social and political relationships—they functioned as a type of social currency.

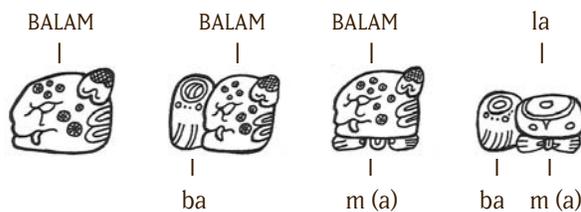
- *Think of other examples in past and contemporary cultures of the ways in which material objects are used as social currency. How have goods been used to help form and affirm social and political relationships on familial, local, national, and international levels?*

## **Chocolate Bowl**

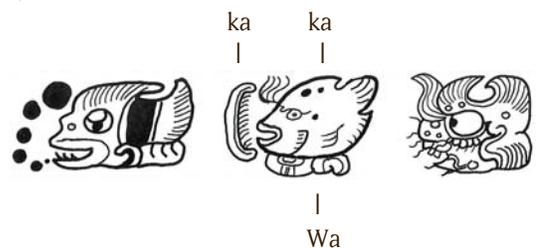
Vessel with Glyphic Text  
Maya, Guatemalan Lowlands, c.A. D. 400–550  
Ceramic with Red, Cream, and Black Slip, 7 x 8½ in.  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Museum Acquisition Fund AC1992.129.1  
Photo © 2008 Museum Associates / LACMA



The Maya had syllable signs for five vowels as well as syllable signs for all the combinations of consonants plus vowels. Often there was more than one sign for a syllable. It is easy to see how the first researchers deciphering Maya glyphs may have thought that the pictures were merely designs or that the pictures themselves told the stories. Once the glyphs were deciphered, however, it was clear that there were many different ways to express an idea; and many different combinations of syllables to spell out the same word, for example, the word for jaguar is *balam*.

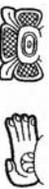
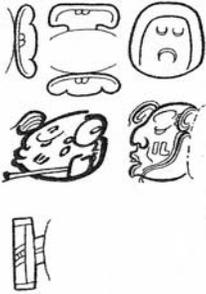
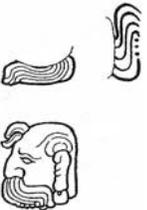


The glyphs on the chocolate bowl are both decorative and functional in their communication of the beliefs and practices of the Maya. Picture-glyphs of faces, animals, symbols, and shapes are compacted into squares or rectangles. Each glyph stands for a thing, an idea, or a sound. The bowl contained chocolate that was stirred and poured to create a frothy drink. These glyphs all represent cacao (*ka ka wa*) or chocolate.

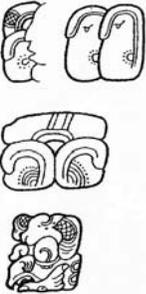
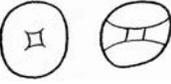
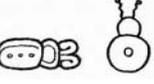
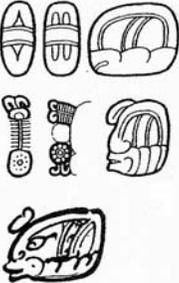


- The chart on the following pages shows a small portion of the Maya syllabary, a system of written characters representing spoken syllables rather than sounds. You can use these symbols to illustrate, in Maya fashion, some familiar words or names. Or you can create your own pictures and symbols to make a glyph to represent the sound or meanings of a word you choose.

## Selected Maya Syllabary

	A	E	I	O	U
B					
K					
M					
N					

## Selected Maya Syllabary

	A	E	I	O	U
P					
S					
T					
Y					

# Trade and Tradition in Tang China

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**T**HE POLITICALLY UNIFIED CHINA OF THE Tang dynasty (618–907) was prosperous, productive, and cosmopolitan in its taste. Travel between East and West across Asia increased under a unified China, and there were many foreign visitors and emissaries during the Tang dynasty. China's then-capital Chang'an (now Xi'an) was at one end of the trade route, and Constantinople (now Istanbul), the capital of the Byzantine Empire, was at the other. Merchants, as well as religious believers such as missionaries and pilgrims, all traveled the Silk Road, a network of trading routes that extended more than five thousand miles. The merchants would often band together in caravans in order to protect themselves on their journey. Silks, ceramics, lacquerware, and metalwork from China were exchanged for items such as horses, ivory, wood, furs, gems, silver, glass, and exotic fragrances, which appealed to the Tang taste for luxury.

Tombs have taught scholars a great deal about artistic production in China as well as about the culture in general. Enormous quantities of *mingqi* (pronounced "ming-chi")—images and models that took the place of actual objects and beings in the tomb—were produced around the capital and other regional centers during the Tang dynasty. In China, it was believed that the soul divides into two upon death. One soul journeys to heaven, while the other stays with the body. To provide for the soul's contentment, therefore, these ceramic replicas of people, animals, and other objects were placed in the grave. The number, size, and detail of the replicas were a reflection of the social status of the deceased. For someone looking at these representations of people, animals, and objects today, the *mingqi* reveal significant aspects of life in Tang China.

- *If mingqi were a part of your burial rituals, what objects, people, and/or animals would be represented? What might these representations reveal about your culture and your values to a future scholar?*

## ***Bactrian Camel***

THE BACTRIAN CAMEL IS EARTHENWARE MADE from fine white clay molded in sections then joined before a first firing at a low temperature. The sculpture was then covered with a white slip. The colorful combination of green, brown, and yellow glazes known as *sancai* (pronounced "sahn-sy"), which was used for funerary figures from the late seventh to the mid-eighth century, was then applied before the piece was fired again. The Tang was an important period for ceramic development in China, and the naturalistic and sumptuous details of this object reflect the popular style of the period. The depiction of the camel in mid-stride, with its head thrown back to emit a loud cry, conveys a sense of vitality and realism based on observation.

- *Look closely at the camel. What are some of the details depicted? What might be the purpose of some of the objects attached to the saddle? What types of things do you think it would be important to have on a long journey during this historical period?*

### ***Funerary Sculpture of a Bactrian Camel***

China, middle Tang dynasty, c. 700–800  
Molded earthenware with molded, modeled, and applied decoration and polychrome (*sancai*) glaze  
34 ¾ x 29 ½ in. (88.3 x 74.9 cm)  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
William Randolph Hearst Collection, 46.16.22  
Photo © 2008 Museum Associates / LACMA



The size and high level of detail that characterize this camel indicate that it is probably from the burial of a prosperous individual. Among the animals represented in tombs at this time, the camel is second only to the horse in popularity. Usually a camel sculpture would be accompanied by its mate and a caretaker in the tomb; it is unknown whether this particular camel had a mate and caretaker, however, as its tomb of origination is unknown. The sculptor's choice of subjects reflects the influence of the silk trade and the fascination with travel in Tang China. Camels were an important animal to the flourishing trade between China, Central Asia, and the Middle East. They were the main vehicles for transportation for merchants and imports from the West.

The two-humped Bactrian camel is from the ancient kingdom of Bactria, in modern-day Afghanistan. Because of their docility and ability to store fat (which would metabolize as water), as well as their behavior that could at times indicate an oncoming sandstorm, camels were ideally suited to traveling the vast distances of the Silk Road, which included long stretches of desert.

- *What types of goods does California import from other countries and states? What do we export to other states and countries? How are these goods transported? How do the items we import from other countries affect the way we view these cultures?*

# Porcelain from Yuan China

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**B**Y THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, THE PROMISE of Tang ceramics had developed into what would ultimately become China's most famous export, porcelain. During the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), China was under Mongol rule, with Kublai Khan acting simultaneously as the Mongol khan and Chinese emperor. Counseled by the Chinese scholar officials who stayed active in public life even upon the advent of a so-called "barbarian" dynasty, Kublai Khan rebuilt the economy, carried out imperial and religious rituals, and patronized Chinese arts.

Blue-and-white ceramic ware was first introduced during the Yuan dynasty. Although Jingdezhen, the site where this platter was produced, would later be famous as an imperial kiln site, blue-and-white ware was not ordered for the imperial palace until after the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Later imperial designs are far more controlled and refined in comparison to Yuan examples of blue-and-white ware. Ottoman sultans and European kings would eventually become collectors of blue-and-white ware. Although there was not an active porcelain trade between China and Europe until the sixteenth century, some examples filtered through the Islamic world earlier. It has been suggested that blue-and-white ware was influenced by Islamic countries from the beginning. The blue cobalt pigment used to decorate this piece was likely imported to China from the Middle East, which suggests a complex network of influence.

- *Porcelain, or "china," is clearly associated with the country where it was invented. Many countries produce goods for export that come to be strongly associated with their national identity. Brainstorm the names of countries and the products for which they are famous.*

## ***Foliated Platter (Pan) with the Eight Buddhist Symbols (Bajixiang), Flowers, and Waves***

THIS EXAMPLE OF YUAN BLUE-AND-WHITE WARE was probably made for a Near Eastern market. It may have been used for formal or ritual occasions or given as a gift or award for service.

- *Look closely at the patterns represented on the platter. Are there any designs or symbols that you recognize? What do you think is the most dominant aspect of the design? Why does it stand out?*

This foliated platter is the result of a long-standing exchange of goods and ideas, and is representative of a fusion of Chinese symbols and Islamic taste in design. It represents this exchange and served to promote the interaction of tastes, beliefs, and technologies between different cultures. The platter's design was painted directly on the body with a cobalt blue underglaze with white reserve areas before it was coated with a clear glaze and fired at a high temperature. The white color comes from the clay itself, a fine white material known as *kaolin* that is native to China. The central motif is made up of eight auspicious Buddhist symbols inscribed in what appears to be a representation of the Buddhist Wheel of the Law. (Buddhism was originally transmitted eastward from India to China centuries earlier and rose to prominence in the fifth century). The unglazed base and freely drawn wave motif are typical of early blue-and-white Yuan ceramics.

### ***Foliated Platter (Pan) with the Eight Buddhist Symbols (Bajixiang), Flowers, and Waves***

China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen,  
late Yuan dynasty c. 1340–68

Molded porcelain with blue painted decoration  
under clear glaze, 2 ¼ x 17 ¾ in. (5.9 x 45.1 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Gift of the Francis E. Fowler, Jr., Foundation  
and the Los Angeles County Fund, 55.40

Photo © 2008 Museum Associates / LACMA



Another feature of the decorative motif is the six "cloud-collar" patterns that echo the foliated rim. Patterns of lotus flowers, abstract foliage, melons, grapes, bamboo, and morning glories are found inside the cloud collars. The source of the "cloud-collar" pattern is the subject of debate among scholars. Some believe the cloud shape comes from designs in Persian metalwork or Mongol and Tartar embroideries.

Others believe the shape comes from Buddhist designs representing the four cardinal directions. A Near Eastern scrolling floral design of pomegranates alternating with lotus or aster blossoms decorates the platter under the rim.

- *Porcelain and other ceramics have long served both useful and decorative functions. Why might a porcelain object like the foliated platter be considered art?*

# Islamic Art in the Ottoman Empire

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**T**HE PROPHET MUHAMMAD FOUNDED ISLAM in the early seventh century, after which it spread rapidly. The term "Islamic art" refers to the art created in service of the faith as well as to the art—both secular and religious—produced in Islamic countries. Islamic art is utilitarian and functional, and is characterized by meticulous craftsmanship.

During the Late Islamic period, three powerful dynasties ruled the Islamic world: the Safavids in Iran, the Mughals in India, and the Ottomans in Anatolia and much of the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The Ottoman Empire (1281–1924) was at its pinnacle under Sulayman the Magnificent, who reigned from 1520 to 1566. There was a wealth of artistic achievements during his reign. During the century following Sulayman's death, the Ottoman Empire began to decline.

Iznik is an important site for the study of Islamic ceramic art during the Ottoman Empire. Located in present-day Turkey, Iznik was on one of the main trade routes extending from Istanbul (Constantinople) to the East. Following the Ottoman conquest, Iznik—long an active site for the production of simple earthen-ware pottery—developed a more distinctive and sophisticated style of ceramics. In addition to table ware, the city's artisans began producing quantities of tiles for Ottoman palaces, mosques, and other monumental buildings.

Chinese porcelain was collected and admired at the Islamic courts from the eighth century onward. The taste for such imported wares may have inspired Islamic potters to develop an artificial clay body known as fritware, intended to approximate the white color and light weight of porcelain. Beginning in the fourteenth century, blue-and-white Chinese porcelain from the Yuan dynasty, like the example in this booklet, began to pour into the markets of the Near East.

Blue-and-white ware influenced the development of the ceramics for which Iznik is best known. Through Mediterranean trade, techniques and decorative motifs traveled to Italy and influenced artistic production during the Renaissance.

## *Tile Panel*

THIS PANEL MADE IN IZNIK DURING THE SECOND half of the sixteenth century is a type of underglaze-painted fritware. Fritware is a composite ceramic made from local materials—white clay, silica, and ground quartz. It is lighter in weight and color than earthenware, and it more closely resembles porcelain. Iznik potters first applied a white slip to the fritware body onto which they painted the designs; the surface was then covered by a transparent glaze. At the center of this composition is a rich cobalt blue with an Arabic inscription reserved in white. Serrated leaves and rosettes in white, green, and red are used to fill the empty spaces of the blue background. The center is bordered by a wide tomato-red band outlined by turquoise blue and decorated by a scrolling design of leaves with two-colored silhouetted rosettes. The palette detailed here is representative of the classical palette of Iznik, which developed fully in the 1550s. Stencils were often used for the compositions. Floral and leaf designs like the ones seen here are standard in Iznik practice.

The most important feature of this panel is the script, which has been translated as "This world is the sowing ground of the next [world]." The writing on the panel represents a style of calligraphy, considered a noble form in Islamic art due to its connection to the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. The letters of the Arabic alphabet look different from the Latin letters of our alphabet, but they represent approximately the same sounds. Written from right to left, the Arabic alphabet has nineteen basic shapes and twenty-eight different letters. The letters change form depending on their position in a word.

### *Tile Panel*

Turkey, Iznik, Ottoman, 1590s  
Fritware, underglaze painted  
29 ½ x 52 ¾ in. (74.9 x 134 cm)  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection  
Gift of Joan Palevsky, M.73.5.6  
Photo © 2008 Museum Associates / LACMA



Calligraphy required a high degree of training. It is believed that the artist who created this panel was not a professional calligrapher. The script used here is known as Thulth, and is one of the six traditional scripts. It is sometimes known as the "mother of calligraphy" because it is so easy to adapt to artistic treatment. In the Islamic world, the beauty of the written word extends to all the arts, and writing became the most significant and highly developed form of Islamic art. The use of epigraphic tiles (such as this one) to decorate mosques and other monumental structures became widespread in the sixteenth century.

- *This panel conveys a number of ideas important to the Islamic faith. Think about other works of art or objects from your culture that represent religious beliefs. How are they similar to or different from the panel? Why do you think religious beliefs are so often conveyed in artistic production?*

- *Compare and contrast the tile panel to the foliated platter. Look closely at the colors and motifs as well as the overall compositions. Do you see any similarities? Describe the differences. What might this analysis tell us about the relationship between the two cultures? What do you think is the most significant difference between the two objects? Why?*
- *Both the foliated platter from China and the tile panel from Islamic Turkey are decorated with repeating motifs of plants that the artisans would have found in the natural world around them. Research a plant that is native to California or to one of the places discussed in this curriculum, then sketch the shapes of its leaves, branches, buds, and flowers. Develop a pattern that incorporates two or more of the shapes.*

# Exploration in Renaissance Europe

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**I**N THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, THE PERIOD known as the Renaissance (or rebirth) began in Italy and eventually extended over the whole of Europe. An important aspect of the Renaissance was a desire to recreate the spirit of the classical arts, literature, and philosophy. Manufacturing and trade were already flourishing in medieval Europe. The increasing demand for luxury goods in Europe fueled (and was fueled by) further exploration of the world. This exploration, paired with a growing belief in the acquisition of knowledge through direct observation, is reflected in the development of mapmaking.

The beginnings of the sciences of geography and astronomy can be traced to antiquity. In fifteenth-century Europe, there was a renewed interest in the creation of celestial globes, which served as both an aid to navigation and a means of teaching and explaining the positions of celestial bodies. The discoveries made by explorers during this time parallel the explosion of interest and the increased manufacture of maps and globes. Following Magellan's circumnavigation (sailing around the globe) from 1519 to 1521, the spherical shape of the earth was gradually recognized and acknowledged. The production of terrestrial globes is representative of these changing ideas. By the third quarter of the sixteenth century, many globe-based maps indicate the belief that the New World was a separate hemisphere. The study of maps and globes reveals the history of our knowledge of the world.

- *What do you know about maps and globes? How is a globe different from a flat map? Why might maps and globes be useful? What kinds of information do they provide? Might they have any uses beyond the practical?*

## **Terrestrial Globe**

THIS TERRESTRIAL GLOBE DATES TO AROUND 1575–1625 or later, and is displayed at LACMA with a matching celestial globe. Pairs of globes such as these were expensive luxury items that served as a reflection of their owner's learning. The terrestrial globe is supported by a bronze figure of a man bearing the globe on the small of his back. His left arm curls up toward the globe and his right hand grips a walking stick. The figure, based on Venetian bronzes of the sixteenth century, is likely Atlas, the Greek mythological figure who was punished by Zeus with the burden of carrying the heavens and the earth upon his shoulders. Other examples of globes from this time are similarly supported. The earliest celestial globe still known to exist is the marble globe known as the *Farnese Atlas* (second century B.C.), which also bears the globe on his shoulders. The figure supporting LACMA's terrestrial globe is positioned on a lapis lazuli base that dates from the nineteenth century. The sculpture and base supporting the celestial globe appear to be identical.

- *What do you think the primary function of this object might have been? Who would have owned pairs of globes like these? What does ownership of such objects tell us about the interests and beliefs of the owner?*

### **Terrestrial Globe**

Italy, c. 1575–1625  
Bronze, gilt bronze, gilt copper, lapis lazuli  
Height: 22 1/4 in. (56.5 cm)  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Gift of Miss Carlotta Mabury, M.49.6.2a–b  
Photo © 2008 Museum Associates / LACMA



The globe is bound by meridian and horizon circles inscribed with a system of measurement. Land masses and bodies of water are labeled on the globe. The newly-discovered lands of North America are charted on this globe as New Spain and the legendary land of Quivira (sometimes spelled Quivera). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Quivira was often shown on maps as lying along the coast of what is now northern California and southern Oregon.

Quivira is also identified on Mercator's map of 1569, which was important to later European map production.

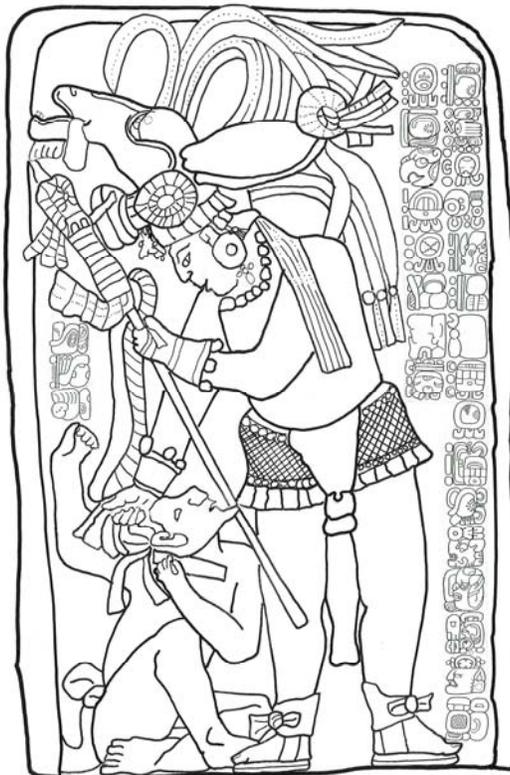
- *What does the production of this terrestrial globe and others like it suggest about the extent of trade and the flow of ideas during the Renaissance?*

# Further Explorations

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In addition to viewing and discussing the transparencies individually, students should compare and contrast the works of art.

- Four of the five objects described in this booklet are ceramics. Compare and contrast their forms, functions, colors, production technologies, design motifs, and styles. In what cases do you think similarities between the objects might have been the result of a trade relationship? Why do you think ceramics are so common to the artistic production of so many cultures?
- Three of these objects—the chocolate bowl, the tile panel, and the terrestrial globe—utilize a system of writing. What is the significance of writing to our understanding of each of these objects? How do the systems differ? What are the similarities between them? Compare and contrast the importance of writing to each of the cultures represented by these objects.
- The curriculum materials ask you to make numerous connections between different cultures from different time periods. When you visit the museum, look carefully at the objects that you stop to discuss and others on display. Pick at least one object that shares a similarity with one of the objects in this curriculum that you believe might reflect the exchange of goods and ideas through trade.
- Of the five works of art, which one do you find the most interesting? Why? Which object tells you the most about the culture that made it? Which one tells you the least? Which is your favorite work of art? Why?



# Online Resources

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## **Ancient Art**

<http://www.historylink101.com>

History Link 101 offers links to numerous sites on the web that provide information about Chinese art, Ancient Aztec and Mayan art, and ancient art of Turkey.

## **Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya**

<http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/mayainfo.shtm>

The National Gallery of Art presented this website in conjunction with a previous exhibition, *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya*. The site includes images of some of the works that were on display, background about the court life of the Maya, information on the documentary produced in conjunction with the exhibition, and a downloadable Children's Guide.

## **History of Iznik Tiles**

<http://www.adiyamanli.org/iznek.html>

Summary of the history of Iznik and the ceramics produced there.

## **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**

<http://www.lacma.org>

Present works of art from LACMA's permanent collection. View selected objects (with informative descriptions) from the permanent collection by clicking on the department of interest. Many more works may be viewed at Collections Online at <http://collectionsonline.lacma.org>.

## **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

[http://www.metmuseum.org/Works\\_of\\_Art/collection.asp](http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/collection.asp)

Tour highlights from the Met's permanent collections, including Asian, Islamic, and European decorative art. Introductory information and links to related publications are offered.

## **Public Broadcasting Service**

<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource>

Find lesson plans based on programs related to this curriculum. Search—Islam and Maya for offline activities, audio/video, interactive, and lesson plans. All are related to PBS productions, there are multiple pages of subject materials.

# Books for Teachers

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- Burke, Peter. ***The European Renaissance: Centers and Peripheries***. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998. The author presents a chronological examination of the conditions in European cultural centers in which innovations occurred during the Renaissance.
- Clunas, Craig. ***Art in China***. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. This introduction to Chinese art is organized thematically under headings such as Art in the Marketplace. Reproductions in color and black and white are included.
- Coe, Michael D. ***The Maya***. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Thames & Hudson, Inc., 1999. Timelines, maps, illustrations, and reproductions of art works accompany this introduction to Maya culture.
- Lau, Aileen. ***Chinese Ceramics***. Singapore: Sun Tree Publishing, 2004. A collection of articles by leading scholars examines the history of earthenware in China from its early beginnings through the Qing dynasty. From the Oriental Art Collected Articles series.
- Irwin, Robert. ***Islamic Art in Context***. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. This text provides an introduction to Islamic art from its foundations through the seventeenth century. It is organized thematically and accompanied by illustrations.
- Macaulay, David. ***Mosque***. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. Istanbul in the sixteenth century is the setting for this fictional account of an architect's commission to design and build a mosque and its support buildings. Readers will learn how these structures functioned in the social context.
- Mack, Rosamond E. ***Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600***. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001. Discusses the importance of Mediterranean trade in luxury goods and the influence of Oriental and Islamic motifs, imagery, and craftsmanship on Italian artists and craftsmen.
- Miller, Mary Ellen. ***Maya Art and Architecture***. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1995. The author approaches the history of Maya art and architecture by asking how and why the Maya people made their greatest works.
- Miller, Mary and Karl Taube. ***An Illustrated Dictionary of Ancient Mexico and the Maya***. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1997. Three hundred entries detail the main gods and symbols of the Olmecs, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, Toltecs, Aztecs, and the Maya.

# Books for Students

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Art, Suzanne Strauss. ***The Story of the Renaissance***. Lincoln, MA: Pemblewick Press, 1997. This book for young adults offers a comprehensive, illustrated history of developments in economics, religion, politics, and art in Europe during the Renaissance. A timeline, maps, and a list of additional resources are included.

Corrain, Lucia. ***The Art of the Renaissance***. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 2001. A broad introduction to the arts of the Renaissance throughout Europe is presented in chapters covering an array of topics, including techniques and individual artists.

Fisher, Leonard Everett. ***Gods and Goddesses of the Ancient Maya***. New York: Holiday House, 1999. This illustrated text discusses the characteristics, natures, and symbols of the principle figures of Maya mythology.

Major, John S. ***The Silk Route: 7,000 Miles of History***. New York: Harper Trophy, 1995. This picture book for older readers chronicles the history of commerce between East and West along the trade route that developed over centuries between China and Byzantium. Illustrated by Stephen Fieser.

Nicholson, Robert. ***The Maya***. Langhorne, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1994. The history and culture of the ancient Maya is introduced in this illustrated publication from the Journey into Civilization series.

Sansevere-Dreher, Diane. ***Explorers Who Got Lost***. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, LLC, 1992. Drawings, maps, routes, and diagrams are included in this collection of eight short biographies of influential explorers of the fifteenth century. Illustrated by Ed Renfro.

Stanley, Tim. ***Palace and Mosque***. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2004. Drawing on the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection, the author introduces Islamic art and culture and explores the importance of Islamic empires in trade.

Williams, Suzanne. ***Made in China: Ideas and Inventions from Ancient China***. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 1997. Accompanied by illustrations by Andrea Fong, this book explores thirty-six inventions and ideas that originated in China within a historical and cultural context. Color photos, diagrams, and reproductions of works of art are also included.

# Timelines

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## Maya

c. 1500 B.C.—A.D. 300	Preclassic or Formative period
c. 250—900	Classic period
c. 400—550	<b>Chocolate Bowl</b>
c. 900—1542	Postclassic period
1542	Spanish conquest

## China

581—618	Sui dynasty
618—906	Tang dynasty
c. 700—800	<b>Bactrian Camel</b>
907—960	Five Dynasties
960—1127	Northern Song dynasty
1127—1279	Southern Song dynasty
1115—1234	Jin dynasty
1271—1368	Yuan dynasty
c. 1340—1363	<b>Foliated Platter</b>
1368—1644	Ming dynasty
1644—1911	Qing dynasty

## Islamic Lands

610	Muhammad begins teaching
632	Muhammad dies
633—651	Muhammad's revelations collected in the Qur'an
c. 650	Muslims conquer Persia
711	Muslims conquer present day Spain and Portugal
732	Battle of Tours
750—1258	Abbasid Empire (Golden Age of Islam)
1281—1924	Ottoman Empire
c. 1550—1600	<b>Tile Panel</b>
1453	Constantinople captured by Ottomans, renamed Istanbul

## Europe

c. 14th century	Renaissance begins in Italy; rise of commercial class
1492	Columbus arrives in America
1519—1521	Magellan's circumnavigation
1569	Mercator's map
1563	Publication of Copernicus's theory of planetary motion
1575—1625	<b>Terrestrial Globe</b>
1687	Publication of Newton's <i>Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy</i>

The Maya Mobile is supported by a grant from the Maxwell H. Gluck Foundation.

Education programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
are supported in part by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs  
and the William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund for Arts Education.

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Cover: Plate with Mythological Bird, Mexico, Maya, A.D. 550–700, Ceramic, Diameter: 14 in.  
Gift of the Art Museum Council in honor of the museum's twenty-fifth anniversary M.90.168.13

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