

SPIRITS OF HAITI  
CATHOLICISM, CULTURAL CROSSROADS, & THE UNIQUELY HAITIAN  
EXPERIENCE

by

LAUREN EICH

WENDY CASTENELL, COMMITTEE CHAIR  
JENNIFER FELTMAN  
HEATHER MCPHERSON

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of Art History  
in the Graduate School of  
The University of Alabama &  
The University of Alabama  
at Birmingham

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2017



## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the characteristics of the spirits Ezili, Legba, and Ogou, in order to determine which aspects of their manifestations incorporate themes of syncretism from Catholic tradition, and which aspects reflect visual tradition that emerged from distinctly Haitian tradition. Elements of Catholic and African traditions, discernable within Vodou iconography, act as a basis upon which the practice was further augmented. These adaptations reveal the mixing of cultures and continuation of tradition that is of central importance to the development of Vodou, as reflections of the process through which the religion overcame the social problems faced by the practitioners, as well as the culturally devastating consequences of Haitian colonial history. These diversifications from the Christianity and African traditions reflect the ingenuity and resourceful nature of Vodou, which through its fluid nature, can be transformed to accommodate the needs of the devotees.

Through a postcolonial methodology, this thesis demonstrates that through the syncretism of Catholic themes, the influence of the West African origins of the Vodou, and the unique experiences of the people in Haiti, the iconography of Vodou visual culture interacted of other religions as it evolved into a distinctly Haitian practice. By looking at the spirits Ezili, Legba, and Ogou, alongside their counterparts of the Virgin Mary, St. Peter, and St. George (or St. James) this essay will outline the syncretization of these spirits with Christian icons, while making parallels to the development of Christian iconography which borrowed from pagan imagery in an effort to place the importance of a figure within a pre-established lineage that placed importance on the image.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to everyone who helped me and guided me through the trials and tribulations of creating this thesis. In particular, my family and close friends who stood by me throughout the time taken to complete my research and articulate my ideas into this manuscript.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is a milestone that has been reached through the support of many individuals. While I cannot succinctly thank each and every person for their invaluable support, there are a few extraordinary individuals I would like to acknowledge.

First, I must thank my thesis committee chair, Dr. Wendy Castenell, at the University of Alabama, for spending countless hours helping me to most clearly articulate what I was trying to convey in this thesis. Her support and comments helped to guide me as I developed the original paper into a much stronger, scholarly work, and I am truly thankful to have had her as a mentor during this process.

I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Jennifer Feltman at the University of Alabama, and Dr. Heather McPherson at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, for their invaluable insight and encouragement during this process. I am also extremely grateful to Dr. Tanja Jones for her support during my undergraduate career at the University of Alabama, and for her encouragement as I debated whether or not to pursue my Master's degree.

To my fellow graduate students, Sara Bernard, Emee Hendrickson, Micah Crenshaw McKibben, Kelby Cox, Allison Springer, and Becky Teague, all of whom have been sources of support and kind words during sometimes stressful days of working and editing this manuscript.

Lastly, I am profoundly grateful for the support provided by my family, my parents Mark and Jann, and my brother Steven, who were sources of endless encouragement, jokes, and support during late nights writing and editing this document.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER TWO. LEGBA & THE CROSSROADS .....	15
CHAPTER THREE. EZILI & HAITIAN WOMEN .....	22
CHAPTER FOUR. OGOU & THE WARRIOR .....	30
CHAPTER FIVE. CONCLUSION .....	38
ENDNOTES .....	41
REFERENCES .....	49
FIGURES .....	53

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Artist Unknown, Rada Altar .....	53
1.2 Artist Unknown, Christ as Sol Invictus. ....	54
2.1 Willie Cole, <i>Elegba</i> .....	55
2.2 Artist Unknown, Staff for Eshu .....	56
2.3 Roland Rockville, <i>Papa Legba</i> .....	57
2.4 Evelyne Alcide, <i>Alegba</i> .....	58
2.5 Yves Telemak, <i>St. Pierre Vodou Banner</i> .....	59
2.6 Artist Unknown, <i>St. Peter Icon Panel</i> .....	60
2.7 Triumphal Arch (Bearded beggar Lazarus) .....	61
2.8 <i>Vévé</i> for Legba .....	62
3.1 <i>Black Madonna of Jasna Gora</i> .....	63
3.2 Nadine Fortulus, <i>Erzulie Dantor Vodou Flag</i> .....	64
3.3 Artist Unknown, <i>Erzulie Freda Daroumin (Rada)</i> .....	65
3.4 Artist Unknown, Mask, “The Owner of the Deep-Set Eyes” .....	66
3.5 Cristina Garcia Roderro, <i>HAITI. Saut d'eau</i> .....	67
3.6 Roudy Azor, <i>La Sirene Beaded Drapo Vodou</i> .....	68
3.7 <i>Vévé</i> For Ezili Danto .....	69
3.8 Yves Telemak, <i>Ezili Danthor Drapo Vodou</i> .....	70
4.1 Artist Unknown, <i>Yoruba representation of Ogun</i> .....	71
4.2 Amina Simeon, <i>St. Jacques Vodou Flag</i> .....	72

4.3 Ogou(Rada),.....	73
4.4 <i>Veve</i> for Ogou .....	73
4.5 Haitian Coat of Arms (1964-1986) .....	74
4.6 Artist Unknown, <i>Ogoun (Rada)</i> , .....	75
4.7 Artist Unknown, <i>Vodou flag (St. Jacques Majeur)</i> .....	76
4.8 Artist Unknown, <i>Saint James Matamoros (The Moor Slayer)</i> .....	77
4.9 Statue. St. Maurice .....	78
4.10 St. George Icon, (St. George Rescuing Emperor's Daughter) .....	79
4.11 Artist Unknown, <i>Diptych Icon with Saint George</i> .....	80
5.1 St. Patrick Driving the Snakes Out of Ireland.....	81
5.2 Damballah Et Aida Wedo (Rada) .....	82



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The practice of Vodou, which originated in the Americas in 1619, has roots in West African religions brought West during the slave trade that were later syncretized with the imagery and rituals of Catholicism. Previous studies on the imagery of Vodou focus on the similarity of Vodou to Catholicism, the ritual aspects of the religion, and formal descriptions of the Vodou *lwa*.<sup>1</sup> More recent scholarship has compared the stigmatism of Vodou to the negative views concerning Islam, particularly in the post-September eleventh attacks in the United States. Scholarship has also examined the views towards Vodou that reflect a belief that it is a form of witchcraft or black magic. These ideas have led scholars to view Vodou as a result of Christian attempts to change the beliefs or suppress the ritual practice of the followers of Vodou.<sup>2</sup>

Through examination of the iconography of Vodou flags, I analyze the cultural hybridity of Vodou, through its relations to Catholicism, origins in African religion, and ultimate evolution into a distinct practice in its reflection of Haitian history. The analysis is coupled with consideration of the aspects that reflect West African origins, in order to provide an analysis of the resultant uniquely Haitian iconography. I consider the cultural hybridity of Vodou, through its relations to Catholicism, origins in African religion, and ultimate evolution into a distinct practice in its reflection of Haitian history. This analysis of the inherently Haitian characteristics of the spirits Legba, Ezili, and Ogou allows me to suggest that coalescence of Catholic themes into Vodou functioned not merely as tools to hide the practice, but also as an avenue to further develop it among these pre-established traditions.

The practice of Vodou that many people are familiar with today, came to the Americas in 1619 and was influenced by the interaction between Catholic iconography and African religions brought to the New World during the slave trade into the French colony at Saint Domingue. The island of Hispaniola was originally settled by the Spanish in the 1490's, and remained under Spanish claim until 1697, at which point the Treaty of Ryswick divided the island into Spanish control in Santo Domingo, and French control in St. Domingue.<sup>3</sup> On January 1, 1804, after years of attempting to overthrow French colonial rule, one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution, Jean Jacques Dessalines, proclaimed the nation's independence. In order to further subvert the potential for the French to retake control of the new country, on April 22, 1804, Dessalines ordered almost 3,000 French men, women and children to be killed with swords, bayonets, or daggers. Dessalines was instrumental in establishing Creole as the national language of Haiti, another step away from the French control over the nation. Creole represents an amalgam of West African language with French dialect and vocabulary, though it also was influenced by English and Spanish language.<sup>4</sup> The syncretism of language is also seen within the practice of Vodou, in the names of many of the *lwa*.

Legba, Ezili, and Ogou, possess elements that reflect Christian syncretism as well as elements that look back to their African origins. However it is important to understand that the historical aspects that influenced attributes of these *lwa* are unique to Haiti. This distinctiveness exemplifies the role played by the people of Haiti in creating a culture that is not just mimesis of African tradition that assimilated Catholic imagery in attempts to conceal the practice. The facets of spirit manifestations that evince inherently Haitian traits suggest that the aspects of acculturating themes from African or Christian conventions was not solely a tool to hide Vodou, but a use of syncretism to further develop the practice and situate it within these pre-established

religions, while at the same time creating institutions that reflected the social, political, and economic ordeals faced by those in Haiti.

In Haitian Vodou, there is *Bondye*, “*Bon Dieu*,” who is the High god that created the other spirits, the *lwa*, which are in charge of the mundane aspects of life. These Vodou spirits are broken into distinct families, or branches, *Petwo*, *Congo*, *Ibo*, and *Rada*. The lesser deities of Vodou, members of different families of spirits, are seen as children of the High god, *Bon Dieu*. The spirits are referred by Haitians as *sin yo*, the saints, or *espiri yo*, the spirits; this distinction is made because they do not view the *lwa* as gods or deities, but as servants of the one and only God, *Bondye*.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, this thesis will use the term “spirit” instead of “deity.” The *Petwo* family is the group most commonly believed to have origins in Haitian or Creole dialects. Spirits from *Petwo* are fiery and hot.<sup>6</sup> The personality traits of the various families show the blending of the practice from West African religions into the Haitian and Creole practice.<sup>7</sup>

Once the practice of Vodou started to spread and gain followers in the New World, the Catholic Church outlawed the practice of Vodou. Early development of Vodou through the interaction with Catholic practice was hindered through strict legislations on slaves’ day-to-day activities. The Catholic Church’s missionaries were responsible for these rulings meant to inhibit the slaves’ ability to conduct their Vodou rituals. For instance, the Police Rulings of 1758 and 1777 made it illegal, under penalty of death, for slaves to meet at night or during the day, when a Catholic priest was not present. A ruling from 1758 banned the slaves from gathering near the house of the master, nor could they gather in remote places.<sup>8</sup> Vodou was outlawed in Haiti until 1804, at which point the country gained its independence after the Haitian Revolution. It is this period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Vodou rituals and beliefs were consolidated and began to be associated with the “familial cult of the Haitian peasantry.” In 1860, a concordat was passed between Haiti and the Vatican in which the Catholic Church controlled education and culture,

which led to a surface-level marginalization of Vodou.<sup>9</sup> Through the periods in which the Catholic Church banned the practice, the practitioners of Vodou found ways to continue their worship of their spirits, even while living in predominantly Catholic cities, through the subtle nuances through which the practitioners could interact with the *lwa*. Interactions with Legba, for instance, could be as understated as making an extra cup of coffee in the morning; he is thought to prefer strong, black espresso.<sup>10</sup>

Vodou is a religion based on practicality and day-to-day routine. Relationships with the *lwa* allow them to intercede on behalf of the Vodou practitioners upon the request for aid for the sick, the hungry, the unemployed, the lonely, or any other misfortunes. The spirits of the Vodou pantheon are addressed during ritual practice, when the participants can address the spirits in order to seek aid from their trials and tribulations. The sacred spaces in which Vodou ceremonies occur are often decorated with Vodou flags (Figure 1.1) These Vodou flags (or *drapo Vodou*) are the objects most frequently associated with “art” created by Vodou practitioners. These ritual flags combine fabric, sequins, and threads to portray images of the spirits, and often also incorporate Christian iconography in the portrayal of the *lwa*.<sup>11</sup> The chapters in this thesis will analyze the Vodou flags associated with three *lwa*: Legba, Ezili, and Ogou. It should be noted that the examples of Vodou flags referenced in this thesis are all relatively contemporary, as the climate of Haiti and the use of these objects, leads them to deteriorate rapidly.<sup>12</sup> While there is no way to know what iconographic changes have occurred since the Haitian Revolution, due to the lifespan of Vodou flags, oral tradition suggests that the iconography was repeated and taught to subsequent generations. While it should be assumed that there were changes, based on the fluidity of images, this thesis relies on extant Vodou flags created in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Vodou flags, made with beads, thread, and other materials viewed as “low” in the art historical canon, exemplify a form of non-Western style perhaps influenced by the social and economic hardships faced by the people of Haiti. Between 1915 and 1932, the aftermath of French colonialism and occupation by the United States left Haiti with a poor economy and little local control over their trade industry. While the U.S. ended its official occupation of Haiti in 1934, they maintained control over its national finances until 1947. In the mid-1950’s the United States helped to install Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier as the nation’s president. Papa Doc’s rule was fueled with corruption and human rights abuses, leading U.S. President John Kennedy to stop aid to country in order to protest the dictator’s regime. President Nixon, however, restored financial aid to the country when Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier took over after his father’s death. By 1970, money from foreign countries made up 70% of the revenue in the Haitian national treasury.<sup>13</sup> This instability of economic infrastructure derived from French colonial and United States interaction with the country, coupled with more recent natural disasters and disease epidemics, has left the country lacking in substantial monetary resources.

Through postcolonial methodology, this thesis analyzes the influence that the relationship between the French Catholic colonists and the enslaved peoples of Haiti brought West from Africa had on Vodou iconography. Accompanying the discussion of similarities between the structural formation of Vodou, I will address the uniquely Haitian aspects of Vodou that continued to develop within the practice. This development resulted in the creation of a religion that was not merely built upon the traditions of Catholicism, but evolved into a uniquely Haitian practice through influences from the indigenous culture. This unique evolution provides an avenue for an analogous comparison of the syncretism seen in Early Christianity and the development of Christian doctrine, which highlights iconographic traditions unique to Christian conventions. My use of the term syncretism, in reference to the acculturation of iconographic

tradition from one religion to the other, is inspired by Peter Burke's *Cultural Hybridity*, and his discussion of the positive context of the term, which he traces to use in other fields than religion through Melvin Herskovits, who used the term in an anthropological context to investigate contact between cultures. Herskovits used the term specifically in discussion of African American culture and religious development. I argue that these moments of syncretism with Catholic practice led to the cultural hybridity seen in the iconography of Vodou.<sup>14</sup>

Postcolonial methodology has been used to explain the reaction of pagan religious followers towards Christians during the spread of Christianity in the Early Christian and Late Antique periods, particularly in a shift in viewing from realism to mysticism.<sup>15</sup> Denise Kimber Buell's work in situating early Christianity within contemporary methodologies and a sociopolitical framework allows her to create a new strategy for the study of Christian "self-definition."<sup>16</sup> Jas Elsner's questions regarding early Christian art and whether looking at images reflects the identity of the individual, could likewise be applied to the study of Vodou in relation to how the slaves and indigenous peoples interpreted the actions and images of the Catholic colonists, and applied those images to their own experience.<sup>17</sup>

The practice of Vodou, while frequently discussed in literature from anthropological or religious studies, has largely been omitted from the art historical canon.<sup>18</sup> Previous scholarship devoted to Haitian Vodou has examined syncretism of Christian iconography into the Haitian *lwa* (Vodou spirit) imagery, the view of non-practitioners towards the practice, as well as the ritual and ceremonial aspects of the practice. Other literature on Vodou imagery has focused on it as a new form of Catholicism, the similarity of Vodou to Catholicism, as well as descriptions of the various Vodou spirits.<sup>19</sup> While the influence of Catholic iconography has been discussed in previous research, it has not been extensively analyzed in order to chart the syncretic aspects

from Catholicism, the origins in West African religion, and how those influences evolved into a hybrid tradition that is unique to the culture of Haiti.<sup>20</sup>

Robert Farris Thompson's *Flash of the Spirit* provides a detailed attempt at identifying influences on art and philosophies of black people in America from various African tribes (Yoruba, Kongo, Dahomean, Mande, and Ejagham.) He discusses *vévé*, cornmeal designs made by the priests and priestesses in order to praise the spirits and incarnate the spirits that the *vévé* depict. These compositions are used to call the spirits to ceremonies and rituals, and are often included in objects that depict the various *lwa* as a means of identifying who is being represented. Thompson's research was foundational in supporting my argument in this thesis, through his analysis of Haitian art as it relates to its African roots and the influence of the Catholic colonists on the Vodou iconographic development.<sup>21</sup>

Karen McCarthy Brown's *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* is an anthropological text based on her experience with priestess Marie Thérèse Alourdes Macena Champagne Lovinski (Mama Lola) and the Vodou practices and rituals she observed during her thirty-year friendship with the priestess. Important to this study is the information provided about the rituals dedicated to the spirits discussed, as well as oral traditions that Brown encountered. She insists on the importance of the word "spirit" as opposed to the word "deity," as Vodou practitioners do not view the *lwa* as deities, but spirits that intervene in the day-to-day aspects of their lives, viewed as too trivial for the attention from the High God. Brown's text provides invaluable observations on Vodou culture and rituals, as well as insight into the relationship between the practitioners and the Vodou spirits. The knowledge of these customs and interactions provides crucial information so that this thesis could relate the visual culture of Vodou with the importance of the *lwa*, their characteristics with both Catholic iconography and African religion, and ultimately their uniquely Haitian elements.<sup>22</sup>

Donald Cosentino's work in the fields of African and Afro-Caribbean cultures and literatures has been an invaluable resource to this study. His "Who is that Man in the Many Colored Cap? Transformations of Eshu in Old and New World Mythologies," has been influential to this thesis's terminology as well as in my understanding of the relationship between the Vodounists and the *lwa* Legba. Other works by Cosentino provide insight into the ritual objects and decorative aspects of the practice, which are also discussed in Gerard Alexis' monograph on Haitian painters. Cosentino's examination of specific *lwa*, their manifestations, and their role in Haitian culture provided a key resource for analyzing the visual culture of Vodou as seen in Vodou flags.<sup>23</sup>

Other contemporary articles such as Ina Fandrich's "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou and New Orleans Voodoo," analyze the connections between Vodou and other African and Afro-Caribbean practices. Fandrich's text also addresses the notion of spectacle and the stigmatization of Vodou. This theme dates from the Charles Duvalier era, of which there are first-hand accounts in an anonymous interview by Claudio Zanchettin in "The Church in Haiti."<sup>24</sup> The stigmatization of Vodou has also led to the scapegoating of the practice, as discussed in Kate Ramsey's "Vodou, History, and New Narratives."<sup>25</sup> Joan Dayan's text on Ezili focuses on the four manifestations of Ezili seen in Haitian Vodou, Ezili-Freda, Ezili-Dantor, Ezili Red-Eyes, and Lasiren.<sup>26</sup> Dayan also considers the complexities of "being Haitian" in a world where the nation was considered a form of "Black France."<sup>27</sup> Jane Boisvert's "In the Image of Ezili Fréda: Literary Examples of the Goddess of Beauty, Love, and Support," examines the Ezili "type" as seen in Haitian literary culture, which she says was used to reflect the "multiracial heritage" of Haiti's history.<sup>28</sup> These examples of scholarship from various fields devoted to the practice of Vodou allowed me to explore the different angles from which scholars have discussed the religion, enabling me to construct an approach to studying its visual culture.



While Vodou exhibits influence from Catholic iconography as well as origins in West African religion, ultimately evolved into a tradition unique to Haiti. Similarly, Early Christian iconography, though it possesses syncretic elements from previous visual tradition, evolved into its own unique practice. Particularly in the first two hundred years of Christian pictorial development, Christian imagery incorporated many aspects of pagan mythological traditions (seen in statues, mosaics, silverware, etc.), as evidenced in the mosaic of Christ as Sol in Figure 1.2.<sup>29</sup> While this coalescence of themes made the practice more relatable to potential converts to Christianity, it did not serve to influence all doctrines and beliefs of Christians. These incorporations of pagan images in the new faith were on one hand, but they were also helpful in allowing Christians to worship secretly to avoid persecution, they were also valuable in establishing the importance of the symbolic meanings of images for newly converted Christians.<sup>30</sup> In an analogous manner, while Vodou shows influence from Catholicism, these similarities do not shape the entirety of the manifestations of the *lwa*. These characteristics of the various manifestations exhibit both the African lineage of the spirits, syncretism with Catholic iconography, as well as attributes that are singularly Haitian.

For Early Christians, the process of creating a deified portrayal of Jesus shows influence from the Hellenistic practices by which they were surrounded. Associations have been made between Christ and Heracles, the son of Zeus. Both figures had important fathers, are raised by adoptive parents, faced many temptations during their lives, and ascended into the sky after their deaths.<sup>31</sup> The repurposing of pagan temples and traditions has been discussed in the context of ‘christening’ pagan objects and spaces, which can be found in texts by St. Augustine of Canterbury and Pope Gregory I.<sup>32</sup> This method of comparison between the traditions and characteristics of Christ and Heracles, through analysis of both visual traditions and their

historical backgrounds, is similar to the methods used in comparing the Vodou *lwa* with their Catholic counterparts.

Located in the grottoes under St. Peter's Basilica in Rome is a mosaic of Sol, which has been interpreted by art historians to be a depiction of Christ-Sol, or Christ as the Sun (Figure 1.2). The mosaic shows Christ as the sun god Helios, or Apollo, seen in the Early Christian depictions of Christ as a beardless idealized youth. It features an Apollo-like figure with rays coming from behind his head, pulled on a chariot by two horses. The iconography of the pagan sun god Helios, which originated in the seventh century B.C.E., consists of a man on a horse drawn chariot. Associations between Christ and the sun can be seen in ancient writings such as those by Eusebius as well as St. Augustine, who referred to Christ as "the sun of justice" in reference to his role in the final judgment.<sup>33</sup>

Similarities between the images of pagan and Christian iconographic tradition have been examined as ways for the Celts to accept Christian practice, but still retain some of their pagan traditions even after their conversion. In her article, "The Effect of Christianity upon the British Celts," Kimberly Grunke examines illuminated texts, architecture, elements of artwork (such as animal motifs, and representations of nature), and more specifically the Celtic Cross and the eternal knot. Grunke studies the iconography of Celtic Christianity as it spread in to Britain, as well as the Celtic people's reaction to the practice of Christianity. This methodology of study of the adaptation of themes and the reaction towards Christian influence provides an analogy for the present study's examination of Vodou iconography, its syncretism of Catholic elements, and ultimate development into something uniquely Haitian.<sup>34</sup>

For newly converted Christians, or potential converts, associations between Christ and the sun god would allow them to associate the figure of Christ with a supremely important spirit that they would have been familiar with through the pagan rituals by which they were

surrounded. By the late eighteenth-century, during the Haitian Revolution, the practice of Vodou worked to establish itself in the visual traditions of pre-established Christianity, which allowed the practice to go somewhat unnoticed by the Church. Moreover, this allowed it to align itself within a tradition of establishing visual conventions that would contribute to the validity of the various *lwa*. The decision to align Christian holidays with festivals that were already important to the established, Hellenistic religions would have made it easier for newly converted Christians to understand the significance of the feast day.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the practitioners of Vodou believed that aligning their feast days with the feast days of the Catholic saints would help to legitimize their practice in the eyes of outsiders, or to potential converts.

One monumental difficulty this thesis faced is the lack of art historical research devoted to Haitian Vodou, leaving this study dependent on research pulled from a range of sources and disciplines. While Karen McCarthy Brown's study of Vodou through her relationship with Mama Lola provides insight into the anthropological aspects of the lives and rituals of Vodou practitioners, there is no art historical literature on the subject.<sup>36</sup> Robert Farris Thompson's text provides analysis of the art historical aspects of African religions, but the focus of his text is broad and not limited specifically to Haitian Vodou.<sup>37</sup> I was faced with the task of piecing together information from various fields, including religious studies, anthropology, and literary studies, as well as folk art and traditional art history. The object of this thesis is to build upon the research previously conducted by the aforementioned sources, in order to trace the development of Vodou iconography, its syncretism of Catholic visual traditions, and distinguish what is distinctly Haitian, in order to study the development of visual traditions in Vodou as analogous to Early Christian iconographic traditions.

A second challenge in the study of Vodou and its iconography is the large amount of tourist-oriented literature, which is filled with partial truths or misinterpretations. The topic of

Vodou is one that is often, intentionally or not, misconstrued in order to be entertaining. It has been turned into a spectacle, both by the media and through pop culture.<sup>38</sup> While the field of anthropology has devoted much attention to the practice of Vodou, as have scholars in religious studies and literary studies, the visual culture has been left out of the art historical canon, with the exception of Robert Farris Thompson's work. These factors have contributed to stigmatizing of the practice, which leads to a scarcity of sources that avoid perpetuating views of Vodou as a spectacle. In order to write an accurate representation of the practice, I had to discern which texts were written with little bias.

There has been considerable research dedicated to the practice of Vodou, however, most scholars have focused on the inclusion of Christian themes as a way for the practitioners to go unnoticed by the Church and to obscure their rituals. Similarities in imagery, combined with the alignment of symbols, festivals, and feast days, show the two newly established religions trying to solidify their spiritual practice and support their growth. This thesis examines the hybridity of three Vodou *lwa*, through analysis of their Vodou flags, in order to chart how the visual culture continued the religious practices from West Africa, syncretized elements from Catholicism, and ultimately grew into a tradition that reflected the vibrant history and experiences of Haitian people.

The second chapter of this thesis will provide an analysis of the attributes and iconography of the Vodou spirit Legba. This *lwa* will be examined in relation to the devotional objects and visual culture of the spirit Legba in order to further elucidate the relationship between the spirit and the figure of St. Peter, as well as the early Christian and pagan origins of this "type." Legba is the Vodou spirit that practitioners must go through in order to communicate with other spirits. As the gatekeeper between the spiritual and earthly worlds in Vodou, Legba is identified with St. Peter, the keeper of the gates to Heaven. Legba is associated with crossroads,

and also viewed as the guardian of doorways, highways, and barriers.<sup>39</sup> The similarity between the Haitian iconographic conventions of Legba (Figure 2.3) and visual traditions of St. Peter (Figure 2.5) can be seen in Vodou flags and other objects, which will be further discussed in this second chapter, as well as the influence of the West African tradition for the spirit Elegba.

The third chapter explores the attributes of the Vodou spirit Ezili and the syncretism of Ezili iconography with Catholic icons of the Virgin Mary. Through analysis of the attributes of Ezili and how they are conveyed in devotional objects and other aspects of visual culture, this chapter will show her importance to practitioners, especially her role in the lives of Haitian women. The four manifestations of Ezili – Freda, Danto, Erzulie-Red-Eyes, and Lasiren – all are depicted with different symbols that are based on their unique attributes. This chapter’s analysis of the portrayals of the spirit, especially her role as “Mother” analyzes the similarities in depictions of Ezili with imagery of the Virgin with the Christ Child (Figure 3.1, 3.2). The multifaceted portrayals of Ezili have been said to reflect the different aspects of women’s lives in Haiti, as well as provide an avenue of female empowerment through reverence of the spirit and the role priestesses play in Vodou temples and practice.

The fourth chapter examines the Vodou spirit Ogou, a spirit in African tradition that ruled over iron, war, and technology. Analysis of the devotional objects related to the manifestations of Ogou allows me to investigate the visual culture of Ogou, specifically through analysis of Vodou flags, in order to ascertain the ways in which these articles reflect aspects of Haitian culture as seen in the spirit. Like Legba, Ogou was called upon as the slaves were brought West during the slave trade.<sup>40</sup> Depictions of Ogou have been linked with Christian figures such as St. George, which this chapter will explore through examination of Vodou flags (Figure 4.2) and other objects that are compared to Catholic icons (Figure 4.9) in order to address how Vodou practitioners shaped their spirits to reflect their unique culture.<sup>41</sup>

The conclusion will reiterate the goals of this study, which examines the cultural hybridity of Vodou, through its relations to Catholicism, origins in African religion, and ultimate evolution into a distinct practice in its reflection of Haitian history. This methodology, based in postcolonial theory, encapsulates the ideas of how those being colonized reacted to the practices of the colonizers, in this case, how the West African slaves and Haitians reacted to the Catholic colonists.<sup>42</sup> This examination of Vodou visual culture demonstrates that, while the practice of Vodou reflects African tribal origins and influence from the Catholic Church, it ultimately has developed into its own indigenous practice that is exemplary of the unique culture of Haiti.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LEGBA & THE CROSSROADS

As Vodou has developed as a practice and culture since the seventeenth-century, it has allowed for the adaptation of the spirits so that they better fit the needs of the practitioners in Haiti. Aspects of Catholic visual culture as well as traditions from the West African religions of the enslaved peoples from Africa were incorporated within the development of the Vodou spiritual pantheon. Legba is the first of the *lwa* invoked in any Vodou ceremony, and he acts as a mediator between the heavenly and the earthly realms. Along with his place at the crossroads between the spirits and the practitioners, Legba is also viewed as the guardian of doorways, highways, gateways, and barriers, which leads his altar to be placed by doorways in Vodou temples. This chapter examines depictions of Legba as examples of the deliberate choices made by Vodou practitioners as they interacted with Catholic themes, and created their distinctly Haitian practice. While the visual traditions for Legba indicate these elements of syncretism with Catholicism, as well as elements that stemmed from the African origins of the slaves brought to Haiti in the sixteenth century, the imagery of the spirit Legba has ultimately evolved into a tradition that is unique to Haitian culture.

Elements of Catholic and African traditions, discernable within Vodou iconography, act as a basis upon which the practice was further augmented. The elements of previous iconographic traditions seen in Vodou flags reflect deliberate choices of syncretism on behalf of the practitioners. This chapter begins with an overview and analysis of the attributes and iconography of Legba, preceding an examination of the traits that are unique to Haitian culture.

It culminates in an examination of the similarity between the Haitian iconographic conventions of Legba and visual traditions of St. Peter that can be seen in Vodou flags (Figure 2.3).

While this thesis examines the syncretic aspects of Vodou adapted from its African origins and from the influence of the Catholic Church in Haiti, it also exhibits traits that are distinct to its country of origin. These adaptations reveal the mixing of cultures and continuation of tradition that is of central importance to the development of Vodou. The aspects of syncretism are indicative of the process through which the religion overcame the social problems faced by its practitioners (enslavement, poverty, hunger, etc.) as well as the culturally devastating consequences of Haitian colonial history. These diversifications from Christianity and African traditions demonstrate the ingenuity and resourceful nature of Vodou, which through its fluid nature, can be transformed to accommodate the needs of the devotees. Legba's role in Vodou tradition demonstrates the amalgamation of Catholic and African elements, while the elements that are discarded or manipulated from the previous traditions, such as the change in skin color in Figure 2.4, demonstrate conscious decisions made by the Vodounists as they developed their visual conventions for their *lwa*.

Rituals for any spirit are often opened with Catholic prayers and songs, some of which call to Saint Peter, the Catholic counterpart of Legba. Birthday parties for Haitian Vodou spirits begin with a prologue called the *Priye Deyo* (Outside Prayers). The *Priyo Deyo* includes Hail Marys, as well as the song calling Legba to open the gates. The beginning of the ritual evokes ideas of Haitian history, reminding the group where they come from and who they are, through the prayers and songs recited at the beginning. Following the song to Legba, there is often a pause or repetition of the song, because the practitioners realize that Papa Legba is old and walks with a limp that prevents him from arriving quickly.<sup>43</sup> The common prayer to Legba, which references his place between the gate of the natural and spiritual realms is: "*Open the road,*



*Open the Gate, Open the door, We wish to come home Papa.*” The association with the keys and position at the gate are what has lead depictions of Legba to be commonly associated with St. Peter, the Christian saint who holds the keys to the heavenly gates (Figure 2.6). Legba, known as Eshu Elegba in Yoruban religion, is one of the two spirits that most clearly translate from West African practice to Haitian Vodou.<sup>44</sup>

Legba’s roots are in Fon tradition, in which the deity(Eshu Elegba) is cursed with being sexually insatiable, after mistreating the deity Fa, a personification of Divinity, which leads to an association between Elegba and phalluses. The implication of this curse became an attribute of Legba’s nature that led to his characterization as a “trickster.” In Haitian Vodou, however, the sexualized aspect of Legba has been eliminated, leaving him as the “Papa Legba” spirit that is revered today. The elimination of phalluses from Legba’s attributes in Vodou has been attributed to various reasons, such as the length of the trip from Africa to Haiti taking too long, or the energy he had to spend in order to keep the gates open during the displacement of the enslaved from their homes in Africa. A third reason was possibly that Haitians did not attribute Legba’s sexuality to keeping the land fertile.<sup>45</sup>

Along with the visual representations of Legba – the depiction of him as an older man with a many-colored hat and a cane – the oral traditions of the *lwa* – make him a distinctly Haitian figure. Haitian, Yoruban, and Fon traditions view Legba (or Eshu) as the spirit or deity that presides over crossroads. While the African influence left Legba to function solely as “gatekeeper,” statically positioned between the spiritual and earthly, Haitian Vodou practitioners modified the role of Legba to actively move between the realms, from the practitioners to the Vodou pantheon. His *vévé* is based on the cardinal points of a compass, showing his role as keeper of the crossroads. Haitian Vodou iconography emphasizes the weaknesses of the African Eshu in order to develop the spirit Legba. African Eshu is depicted with two faces, symbolic of

his existence in both the earthly and spiritual realms (Figure 2.2), whereas Legba is depicted more anthropomorphically.<sup>46</sup>

The similarity between the manifestations of Legba with African traditions has been traced to the utter helplessness of slaves as they were taken from their homes, an experience in which they would likely call upon the spirit associated with crossroads. The association between Legba and crossroads allowed the spirit to be visually analogous to Catholic visual traditions for Saint Peter.<sup>47</sup> Legba's depiction in Haitian Vodou involves his role as gatekeeper, which identifies him with the Catholic St. Peter. This differentiation is seen in depictions of Legba, which illustrate him as old and of a lower status.<sup>48</sup>

Yves Telemak's *St. Pierre Vodou Banner* (Figure 2.5) represents the figure of Legba as St. Peter through a complete fusion with the Catholic figure. The figure of St. Pierre is placed in front of a turquoise background, with a rooster behind him and to his right. Above the rectangle space inhabited by the figure is a text banner reading "Saint Pierre" and the banner underneath the figure identifies the artist's name and the year of the flag's creation. On either side of the turquoise space is a collection of objects: a coffee cup and three more indistinguishable items. At the corners of the flag the four standard suits of playing cards are depicted – a heart, diamond, spade, and club – in each corner. The coffee cup references the spirit's love of coffee, particularly strong espresso. The symbols from card suits refer to the role that a deck of cards plays in Vodou *leson* (or divination), in which a priest in Vodou ritual uses a standard deck of cards.<sup>49</sup> Legba's role as mediator between the spiritual and earthly realms in Vodou make the figure's placement between the families of cards logical when examined with knowledge of Legba's relationship with the spirits. The analogous attribution of keys and similar positioning at gates lead to associations between Legba and St. Peter, the Christian saint who holds the keys to the heavenly gates. Saint Peter, in Christian tradition, is associated with the iconographic

inclusion of keys, symbolizing his role as the keeper of the gates to Heaven.<sup>50</sup> Figure 5 depicts a Byzantine icon of Saint Peter, in which he is shown – in front of a gold background – as an aged man, with a blue garment underneath a green wrap. Around his neck are two keys, part of his iconographic tradition, and in his left hand he holds a scroll and a crozier.

The depiction of Legba as an aged man with white hair coincides with both his Vodou role as an old man with a cane, and the Catholic portrayal of Peter in his later years, visible in early icons (Figure 2.6).<sup>51</sup> Roland Rockville's Vodou flag *Papa Legba* (Figure 2.3) represents the spirit standing in front of a wall in the upper right quadrant of the scene. This space is surrounded by red, green, and yellow fabrics that make up a geometric border. In the upper left corner, in the space behind the figure, light gray text that reads "Papa Legba" located above a red *vévé* for the *lwa*. The haloed, white-haired figure wears a red cloak with a gold object hanging from his belt. His left arm holds a cane while his right arm reaches out in a blessing gesture. Animals fill the ground around the figure (from mid-ground to foreground, left to right, including: a horse, a donkey, a cow, a sheep, a duck, a pig, a rooster, a dog, and a peacock). Of particular interest to this study is the presence of a rooster amongst these animals, as the rooster is associated with the Catholic visual tradition for Saint Peter, referencing his denial of Christ, discussed in John 21:15-21.

While Legba is closely associated with Saint Peter through their roles as gatekeepers, he is also sometimes associated with Saint Lazarus, through his possession of a crutch or walking stick as well as the inclusion of dogs in his imagery.<sup>52</sup> Evelyne Alcide's *Alegba Vodou Flag* (Figure 2.4) clearly relates to the traditions of Lazarus (Figure 2.7). The flag depicts the *lwa* as a gray-haired, bearded man, wearing a loose red garment tied over his right shoulder, leaning on a crutch, and covered in small red sores. The figure is placed on a path, or roadway, that leads to a red-doored building with a yellow steeple. Two dogs, one of which licks a red sore on his leg,

flank him. Depictions of Lazarus, a Catholic figure discussed in the Gospel of John, exhibit aspects of his story such as: his role as a beggar; his seat by the gate of a home owned by a rich man; and the dogs that come to lick his sores. He is often shown as an old man with a crutch, with sores covering his body, as seen in Figure 2.7. The interchangeability of the Catholic and Vodou images is exhibited in the placement of images of Lazarus by doorways so that Legba, the guardian of doorways and barriers, will protect the space.<sup>53</sup>

The uniquely Haitian traits of the Vodou *lwa* grew out of their African origins and adapted traditions from Catholic themes. The use of Christian images within Vodou iconography was not purely resultant from influence of the French Catholic colonists, rather aspects of the vodou flags are indicative of deliberate choices made by the practitioners as they developed their own visual culture. These choices are reflected in the amalgamation of specific Catholic themes that were paired with traditions brought from Africa, and later modified to demonstrate Haitian history and its unique culture. This interaction with Catholic imagery played a role in the evolution of Vodou visual tradition, along with influence from the African roots of the practice, however, through analysis of Vodou imagery, the complex iconographic tradition reflects a distinct progression of uniquely Haitian characteristics.

An important visual aspect of Vodou rituals and ceremonies is the creation of *vévé* for various spirits. The *vévé* design for Legba, which includes a crutch is drawn on the ground with cornmeal at the beginning of every vodou ceremony (Figure 2.8). In Vodou rituals, the first spirit that must be called is Legba, the gatekeeper between the spiritual and earthly worlds. The function of a *vévé* has been compared to images or statues of saints, as each spirit has a unique design that identifies them. *Vévé* have been traced to African origins, but are also derived from the American influence on the religion. The designs of the *vévé* require artistic skill to recreate the geometric patterns associated with each spirit, but many early anthropological studies of the

designs dismissed the work as naïve. These *vévé* are abstracted symbols of the *lwa*, which convey the uniquely Haitian symbol for each spirit. While they exhibit the associated attributes for the spirits of the Vodou pantheon, the abstracted forms of the iconography and the way in which they are created make them unmistakably Haitian. While the cornmeal versions of these designs are only preserved through photographs, the symbols are also used in ironwork and included in painted images of the spirits. The role of the *vévé* in *lwa* identification is seen in the upper left corner of the Rolland Rockville Vodou flag, where the abstracted symbol serves to identify the figure portrayed as Legba even if the depiction is visually similar to Catholic iconography (Figure 2.3).

As Vodou continually developed, it allowed for the adaptation of the spirits to better fit the needs of the practitioners in Haiti, while incorporating aspects of Catholic visual tradition. The characteristics of Legba originated in African Fon tradition, in which he was seen as the caretaker of the universe. The characteristics of Legba's African counterpart are translated in Haitian Vodou depictions of Legba as the link between the Godhead and the natural world, and the *lwa* are tasked with nurturing the universe and a creative power. Also from Fon tradition is the association between Legba and fire, which is derived from the Fon connection between fire and life.<sup>54</sup> The fluidity of the manifestation of Legba reflects the nature of Vodou itself, which has been adapted and adjusted in order to combine its West African roots with the syncretized Catholic elements, as well as to accommodate the influence of Haitian social and political climates. The elements of these previous iconographic traditions seen in Vodou flags reflect deliberate choices of syncretism on behalf of the practitioners. The influence of Catholic and African traditions are discernable within Vodou iconography, which served as a basis upon which the practice evolved.

## CHAPTHR THREE

### EZILI & HAITIAN WOMEN

Just as with the Haitian iconography associated with Legba, the visual traditions for Ezili display elements of syncretism with Catholicism, as well as elements that stemmed from the African origins of the slaves brought to Haiti in the sixteenth century. However, the imagery of the spirit Ezili has ultimately evolved into a tradition that is unique in its representation of Haitian culture, specifically the struggles faced by women in the country. This chapter examines how the four main manifestations of Ezili exhibit Haitian culture and how these uniquely Haitian aspects are illustrated through Vodou visual culture. While Ezili depictions indicate elements of interaction and influence from Catholic visual tradition, the combination with uniquely Haitian aspects associated with the spirit are indicative of the selective nature of the syncretism and the uniqueness of this visual culture to Haiti. The elements of syncretized Catholic elements and origins in African tradition served as a basis from which the practice developed.

During the rise and spread of Christianity there may have been influence from pagan traditions, but once those were adopted into Christian iconography, they evolved and were implemented into a visual culture that was distinct to Christianity. When viewed as structurally analogous, the aspects of uniqueness in both Christian and Vodou iconographic developments show similar innovations from pre-existing practice. Even though early Christians may have borrowed from pagan institutions, aspects of Christian practice are distinct to Christianity. Similarly, while Vodou is based on African religion and influenced by Catholicism, aspects of the practice are distinct to Haiti. In order to relate the *lwa* Ezili to the aspects of ceremony and

culture that indicate her singularly Haitian attributes, this chapter analyzes the manifestations of Ezili, and how the depictions of them illustrate the interaction between the colonized in Haiti and the Catholic colonists, the roots in West African religion, and its ultimate evolution into a visual tradition that is unique to Haitian Vodou.

The spirit Ezili has four manifestations, Ezili Freda, Ezili Danto, Ezili Red-Eyes, and Lasiren. The multi-faceted portrayals of Ezili reflect the different aspects of women's lives in Haiti, as well as provide a guide for how they should live their lives. This visual tradition for depictions of Ezili has been attributed to influence from Catholic icons, specifically portrayals of the Black Madonna.<sup>55</sup> It is believed that the people of Haiti were exposed to depictions of the Black Madonna when Polish soldiers were sent to Haiti by Napoleon to fight under his brother-in-law General Charles Leclerc. The soldiers are said to have brought with them icons of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, from the Jasua Gora Monastery (Fig. 3.1). In this icon, the Madonna wears a blue veil, trimmed with gold. The inclusion of the Christ child in the image relates to the iconography of the spirit Ezili in her role as Mother, although Haitian practitioners view the child as Ezili's infant daughter rather than her son. In *L'Home d'airain*, Timoleon C. Brutus (1886-1971), the French Minister of Foreign Affairs in Haiti from 1948 to 1949, explains that for many Haitians, the idea of the Virgin Mary as black resonated with them as their protector due to a passage from the Song of Solomon in which the Queen of Sheba says "I am black, but comely."<sup>56</sup> The Queen of Sheba has been viewed as a prototype for the Catholic Church, an embodiment of Wisdom, and a foreshadowing of the Virgin. The quote was later used to justify the portrayals of the Black Madonna type.<sup>57</sup>

Nadine Fortulus's *Erzulie Dantor Vodou Flag* (c. 2005) depicts the *lwa* Ezili Danto and her daughter, Änais (Fig. 3.2). The figures are placed within a blue frame with a green triangular border, while two angels are placed in the upper corners, looking down towards the seated pair.

Ezili is depicted with a white veil with narrow blue stripes draped over her head. Underneath this cloak, Ezili wears a red and white striped dress, which appears to be belted beneath her chest. The child wears similar fabrics, however its head is uncovered, showing her golden hair with waves coming off of the top and sides. The child's left arm reaches across the mother, making a blessing gesture, and in her right arm she appears to hold a book. Ezili Danto is traditionally depicted in blue, red, or polychrome fabrics, and in the company of her infant daughter, Änais. She is viewed as a warrior-like figure that acts as a protector of women and children, which is the reason for the frequency with which she is portrayed holding a child.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the iconographic tradition for depictions of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. Mary and the Christ Child are seated in front of a green background, each figure represented with gold nimbi. Mary wears a gold trimmed dark blue veil with gold fleur-de-lis patterning throughout. The fabric drapes gracefully around her face, framing a subdued expression that is only broken by a group of scratches on her right cheek. The cloak covers her shoulders and most of her arms, with only a few points at which the red lining is shown. The Virgin's left arm reaches across her body in a gesture that leads the viewer's eyes towards the Christ child. He is shown wearing a red garment, also with gold trim, with gold floral patterning similar to that of Mary. In his right arm he holds a small dark book with gold accents, while his left arm makes a blessing gesture.

Further linking the *lwa* Ezili Danto to the Mary of Czestochowa icon are the three scars on her cheek, which are linked to injuries sustained during a struggle between the two manifestations of Ezili. They have also been attributed to wounds she sustained during the revolution, a critical moment in the development of Haitian culture as its own entity, distinct from the French Catholic colonists.<sup>58</sup> While the Virgin Mary is depicted as an idealized submissive mother, the Vodun spirit's Mothers (Freda and Danto) have more human attributes.



Although they still provide examples for love, care, and hard work, the two spirits also manifest examples of anger (both righteous and raging), power, sensuality, sexuality, frustration, and loneliness, which are seen in objects associated with the *lwa* that appear in Vodou flag depictions of her.<sup>59</sup> Ezili wears three wedding bands on her ring finger, showing her marriages to Damballah (the serpent spirit), Ogou (the spirit of war and ironwork), and Agwé (the spirit of fisherman). Vodou practitioners look at this as a sign of a large heart rather than a form of adultery or promiscuity.<sup>60</sup>

This pattern of visual syncretism is analogous to the acculturation and repurposing of pagan themes by Early Christians as the practice moved westward. As Catholic icons and chromolithographs of Mary and the Christ Child were brought to Haiti, Vodou practitioners incorporated aspects of these visual traditions into their imagery. Depictions of Ezili Freda similarly exhibit these instances of syncretism (Fig. 3.3). Ezili Freda, the *lwa* of sweetness, sensuality, and beauty, and is thought to have an airy and gentle nature. The tradition of bi-racial depictions of Ezili Freda, seen in the use of lighter skin coloring in illustrations of the spirit, is important as it is said to keep the love of Ezili from being lustful, because the whiteness “signified the lust that could be acceptable as a type of love.”<sup>61</sup> The relationship between Ezili and those who practice Vodou, exhibits the notion that every woman is an “emanation of Ezili.”<sup>62</sup> The role of Ezili, particularly to slaves in Haiti prior to the Revolution, shows the importance of romance to the culture in its persistence throughout the severe oppression and mistreatment of the enslaved peoples. The sexual freedom of the Ezili Freda manifestation allowed for free women of color in Haiti to feel validated if they chose to act as a mistress to a French colonist, which would provide them a source of food, a home, and a life away from poverty.<sup>63</sup>

In Nigeria, Ezili is referred to as the river goddess Oshun. Illustrations of the goddess Oshun encompass many similar attributes of the goddesses Venus and Aphrodite.<sup>64</sup> Oshun is considered one of the most powerful spirits of the Yoruba pantheon, and is of equal status to the Nigerian deity Ogun. Because of her association with a coral comb, Oshun is referenced through certain hairstyles, which are often emphasized in depictions of her (Fig. 3.4). Depictions of Oshun vary, sometimes showing her as old or young, rich or poor, loving or spiteful.<sup>65</sup>

The association between Oshun and Ezili leads to connections between Ezili and water, which is important when studied in relation to the pilgrimage to the waterfall Saut D'Eau, revered as the baths of Ezili and a place to renew relationships with Ezili.<sup>66</sup> At this site, vows are made with the expectation that the spirit will hold up her end, but if she does not "deliver" then the pilgrim does not have to hold up their end of the vow. Many times, an entire family cannot afford to make the trip to Saut D'eau, so one member will be sent as a representative. Every year, for the Festival of Saut D'eau, musicians lead a procession of followers to the waterfalls, where they bathe in the water (Fig. 3.5), dance to music, and light candles. The area, filled with lush greenery, is associated with fertility, which is another trait of Ezili.<sup>67</sup> The pilgrimage to Saut D'Eau is also used to promote fertility, with women leaving their underwear at the falls as an offering to ask the Mother spirit to help them with infertility.<sup>68</sup> At many pilgrimages or festival celebrations, the color white is worn in order to indicate the relationship with spirits of light.<sup>69</sup> The pilgrimage to Saut D'eau reflects the closeness of the practice to Catholicism, in its importance as a site for both practices. In the early to mid twentieth century, the Catholic Church had Our Lady of Mount Carmel consecrated at Saut D'eau, the location of multiple mystical apparitions of the Holy Virgin in a palm tree.<sup>70</sup>

Lasiren is a third manifestation of the spirit Ezili; she is the ocean, whose symbols include mermaids, mirrors, combs, whales, and snakes. The comb and mirror can be seen in

Roudy Azor's *La Sirene Beaded Drapo Vodou*, which depicts Lasiren with jeweled armbands in front of a striped background (Fig. 3.6).<sup>71</sup> The manifestation of Lasiren is connected to the African "Mammy Water," whose persona has been linked to the mermaid figures seen on the bows of European ships that would have belonged to merchants and slave traders. She is viewed as both a mermaid and a whale, sometimes appearing as separate spirits, never fully seen or present for an extended time.

When a practitioner experiences Lasiren, it often comes with a feeling that she is calling them back to Africa, or calling them to join her underwater.<sup>72</sup> Like the sirens of ancient Greece, if a practitioner gazes at Lasiren for too long or reaches out to her, they will often drown. The portrayal of sirens is seen in Early Christian and medieval types where the siren represents the idea of a monstrous female, analogous to ancient Greek traditions in which the sirens Skylla and Charybdis represented the nightmare feminine, beautiful but lethal. Men had to cover their ears to avoid being tempted by the sirens' call to the sea, whereas in Medieval and Early Christian art sirens were viewed as images of vanity, or a cautionary image against the evils of women.<sup>73</sup> In Vodou flags for Lasiren, such as the one Fig. 3.6, she holds a comb and a mirror, objects that are associated with the Christian and Late Antique depictions of sirens.

Vodou is a religious practice that elevates women and places them in positions of power and leadership. One of these instances of feminine empowerment in Vodou is the existence of Vodou priestesses, or *manbo*. The role of women as *manbo* is exemplary of a sharp deviation from Catholic practice. The role of women in African-based religious practices is a role most often seen through portrayals of a "conjure woman" type, indicative of a cultural fascination of black woman magic, perhaps stemming from the powerful role women play in Vodou and other Afro-Caribbean practices. In Haiti, along with this role of *manbo*, women can also gain recognition as herbalists and *fem saj* (midwives). These roles as healers are often relegated to

men in the rural areas of Haiti, but in the urban areas, there is a more equal distribution of these healing careers between men and women. It is also in these urban areas where women can act as the heads of Vodou temples, referred to as “mother” by the “children of the house,” the practitioners, and male temple leaders are called “father.” It is this distinction between urban and rural Haiti which most clearly exemplifies the distinction between male and female roles, as men have unquestioned authority in rural areas, while women can become the heads of Vodou “families” in urban settings.<sup>74</sup> Great!

Analysis of Ezili’s role in the Vodou pantheon shows the spirit’s ability to instill ideas of equality between men and women, with Ezili acting as a key example of female strength. Their ability to provide the examples of human emotion allow them to be mirrors for the silent and unobserved struggles faced by Haitian women.<sup>75</sup> The importance of Ezili for women in Haiti, and in the role *manbo* play in Vodou religious leadership, is essential in the study of the *lwa* and the characteristics that cannot be traced to origins in the African spirits Oshun, or to the Virgin Mary.<sup>76</sup>

Vévé for the manifestations of Ezili spirits have different designs. The design for Ezili Freda is a visual testament to her role as the spirit of love, and her concern with love, flowers, and jewelry through the inclusion of hearts, jewels, and frequent use of “feminine” color palettes. Ezili Danto’s *vévé* features the dagger that she is believed to have used when she led the people to victory in the Haitian Revolution. Both of these symbols feature hearts that are filled with small squares and are meant to reference the peace that occurs when everyone lives by the virtues exemplified by Ezili (Fig. 3.7).<sup>77</sup> The heart and dagger association with Ezili are not limited to the abstract *vévé* designs, but also are symbols used in Vodou visual culture to signify the *lwa* that is being represented. In Yves Telemak’s *Ezili Danthor Drapo Vodou*, Ezili and Anais are surrounded by a circle of objects: a dagger, a scepter, a candle, a bull, a heart, a coffee

cup, and a silver object with three points (Fig. 3.8). *Vévé* exhibit the associated attributes for the spirits of the Vodou pantheon, in this case Ezili, and their abstracted forms act as symbols, which are unmistakably Haitian in tradition.

The visual traditions seen in the depictions of Ezili show the influence of African religions through her similarities with Oshun, while also exhibiting syncretism with Catholicism through visual parallels with the Virgin Mary and Christ Child. Both the visual portrayal and the characteristics of Ezili demonstrate the importance of her role in the Vodou pantheon, particularly her significance for Haitian women and their political status.<sup>78</sup> These aspects that are unique to Haitian history and the social climate show the practice's ability to be modified in order to better meet the needs of the practitioners. This modification of tradition and iconography is seen in the syncretism of pagan pictorial tradition into Christian conventions.

The traditions and associations of the manifestations of Ezili illustrate aspects of the culture that developed in Haiti, stemming from African practices and influenced by the French Catholic colonists. The attributes of these manifestations are demonstrated in the ceremonial interaction between the practitioners and the *lwa*, and are ultimately shaped through the social, economic, and political events of Haitian history. The characteristics of Ezili, seen in the visual culture and traditions associated with the deity align her with the Virgin Mary as well as with West African spirits and deities. While the spirit possesses clear points of syncretism with those origins, there are many facets of her iconography and characteristics that reflect traits that are indigenous to Haiti. The distinctly Haitian attributes demonstrate that the practice was not just based on the traditions of other religious cultures, but modified those customs in order to create a new visual tradition unique to Vodou customs in Haiti. This uniqueness is an expression of Haiti's history, and the social and economic struggles of its people, through the manifestations of the *lwa*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### OGOUE & THE WARRIOR

Ogou represents two main personas: a violent warrior, armed and ready for war, and society's ideal male, who protects and nurtures, exudes sexual prowess, and strives for justice. This chapter examines the traditions and depictions of the spirit Ogou in order to analyze how his attributes exemplify interaction between enslaved peoples in Haiti and the Catholic French colonists. While this interaction exists within Vodou visual tradition, the iconography ultimately developed into a distinctly Haitian culture. The practitioners deliberately adopted aspects of Catholic images as they were exposed to the colonists' visual culture, a conscious acculturation that is exhibited in the depiction of the Vodou *lwa*. This chapter examines the visual tradition for depictions of Ogou, which originated in Haiti in 1607 and have developed through the course of Haitian history. The flags, paintings, and performative aspects of Vodou art and ceremony illustrate that history in order for the practitioners to "know" their spirits.

Ogun, whose followers are predominantly male, is the deity associated with ironwork, war, and hunting. This tradition, found in Yoruban practice, is viewed as an amalgamation or syncretism of other tribal religions from West Africa. Iron depictions of Ogun have been found in Yorubaland dating from the sixteenth-century, when the supply of iron increased in the area. The nineteenth-century helmet mask depiction of Ogun exhibits the warrior characteristics of the deity through the shield and weapon in his hands (Fig. 4.1). This depiction of Ogun is similar to the tradition for Haitian Vodou illustrations of Ogou, which emphasize his role as a warrior. However, in Haitian Vodou imagery he is often shown on horseback (Fig. 4.2), similar to

depictions of St. George or other Catholic warrior saints.<sup>79</sup> Ogou's role as warrior can be seen in his *vévé* design, featured in the *Ogou* flag in Figure 1.5, in which objects associated with the *lwa* are arranged and depicted in the triangular shape seen in Ogou's *vévé* (Fig. 4.3). Ogou's *vévé* also shows potential influence from the Haitian coat of arms, which emerged in 1807 and was reintroduced during the Charles Duvalier Era from 1964-1986 (Fig. 4.4).<sup>80</sup> Each of these designs is based on a triangular plan with spear-like objects deviating from a centerline at an angle, with pennants hanging off each side, with weapons on the ends. Ogou's *vévé* design features leaves creating a horizon line at the lower half of the design, while the coat of arms includes trees and other greenery. One possible reason for the similarity between the coat of arms and the *vévé* is the association between Ogou and prowess in war, as 1807 was only three years after the end of the Haitian Revolution.

The most common iconographic depiction of Ogou shows him in armor, with a machete or other weapon in his hand (Fig. 4.2). The idea of a military god is based in stories of African wars, as well as ideas of the Haitian Revolution.<sup>81</sup> In Yoruba tradition, Ogun was viewed as a "divine blacksmith," ruling over iron, war, and technology. Ogun (or Gu in Dahomey) was called upon as the slaves were brought West during the slave trade. He would be recreated as Ogou in the Vodou pantheon. The pairing of Elegba and Ogun in this time of helplessness is traced to their association with crossroads and war.<sup>82</sup> Ogou is associated with the colors red and blue, and is the spirit of ironwork and the protector of wealth. His symbols include a machete, an axe, an iron, rakes, spades, and yams. All of these objects would be placed on his altar.<sup>83</sup>

As the African practices were brought West the ability of the Ogou traditions to thrive, or even to flourish, was probably based on the meanings he projected, and also the way that he manifested those meanings.<sup>84</sup> In order to relate to modern practitioners' lives, Ogou's tradition has evolved to become the spirit followed by those that work in oil fields, or with modern heavy

machinery such as weapons, machines, and trucks. His association with justice has led some of his followers to believe that living by Ogou's sword as opposed to living by the Bible would reduce crime rates. In Nigeria, priests of Ogun were also given the responsibility of guarding the cities. The head priest, who would also have been head guard, would have the responsibility of assigning other priests of Ogun with their guarding duties. As blacksmithing became less prevalent, Ogou began to be associated more popularly with war and warriors. In Haiti, the spirit Ogou is also associated with storms and lightning.<sup>85</sup>

An early example of Vodou visual culture, seen in this mid-twentieth-century Vodou flag of *Ogoun (Rada)*, depicts a bearded Ogou on a white horse, wearing a red cape and garment, a turban-like headdress, and carrying a machete (Fig. 4.5). A second horse and rider appear behind him on the left side, also wearing red. The figures are placed in front of a multi-colored background, with alternating red, black, white, and yellow/brown triangles. While this flag shows influence from depictions of Catholic warrior saints through its composition and figure placement, the colors of the background and depiction of the spirit are far removed from European visual traditions. *Ogoun (Rada)* isolates and emphasizes the Haitian aspects of the spirit, specifically through the colors and patterns used, as well as through the machete he wields.

There are up to twenty-one manifestations of Ogou, but the most common subdivisions are Ogou Sen Jak, Ogou Panama, Ogou Feray, Ogou Badagri, Ogou Yamson, Agéou, and Achade (also called Shango). The manifestation of Ogou Sen Jak (Saint Jacques) is associated with the Catholic Saint James the Elder, the brother of John and the first apostle to be martyred. Ogou Panama is viewed as an important person, who must be treated with reverence and esteem during ceremonies. Ogou Panama shows the most distinctly "Vodou" traits, as he is depicted wearing a Panama-style hat that was characteristic of Florvil Hyppolite, President of Haiti, who was revered as a hero due to his successful resistance to a rebellion in the city of Jacmel in



1896.<sup>86</sup> Ogou Feray is a violent and unyielding manifestation of the spirit. Ogou Badagri is the manifestation that is viewed as shy, handsome, brave, and loyal, which contrasts Ogou Yamson who is an unreliable drunk, as well as Agéou who is a liar and a beggar. The manifestation Achade (or Shango) is believed to be a sorcerer.<sup>87</sup> These manifestations exhibit varying degrees of syncretism from Catholic and African religious tradition, as well as elements that grew out of uniquely Haitian experience through their attributes which are based on Haitian political leaders.

Leaders of the Haitian Revolution were early influencers for the development of Ogou's attributes. One of these leaders, Jean Jacques Dessalines (1758-1806) was a commander in the Haitian Revolution, and was later appointed by Francois-Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) to head the South Province of Haiti. When L'Ouverture was captured in May 1802, Dessalines was appointed to lead the resistance. In 1804, Dessalines proclaimed Saint Domingue as an independent state, and named the nation "Ayiti" which meant land of the mountains, and a year later made himself emperor of Haiti.<sup>88</sup> The Petwo family attributes of Ogou are linked with expressions of rage against enslavement, oppression, and discrimination between classes. Most manifestations of Ogou have been placed within the fiery Petwo group, drawing associations between the red worn by his followers and the aggression of those who are possessed by him.<sup>89</sup> Followers of Ogou wear the color red as it references the color associated with the *lwa*. This association with Ogou and the color red allowed the practitioner's imaginations to associate Ogou with Dessalines. The assassination of Dessalines in 1806 led to a convergence of Vodou and Catholic traditions, in which Vodou practitioners associate the suffering of Christ during the Passion and the legends of Ogou suffering as a way to more closely associate the two practices.<sup>90</sup>

The association between Ogou Panama and President Florvil Hyppolite (1828-1896) derives from his predilection for wearing Panama-style hats. The Haitian army was loyal to Hyppolite, especially when the president's administration was threatened in 1891 by a group of

rebels from Northern Haiti. The president eventually died of a heart attack. Haitian oral tradition, however, attributes his death to the moment that the president's Panama-style hat fell off, a bad omen that indicated that the saints would not help save the leader. Another song from Haitian oral tradition replaces the figure of Hyppolite with the spirit Ogou in association with the Panama hat.<sup>91</sup>

Manifestations of Ogou also exhibit the repression of the Haitian people by President François Duvalier (1907-1971), known as "Papa Doc." The oppression experienced by the people of Haiti led to the introduction of the Ogou Badagri manifestation that taught lessons of pride and endurance. The lying manifestation Agéou was used to teach people practical survival skills like ducking, bobbing, and fainting as a diversionary tactic. Duvalier used Vodou as a tool to scare people in order to manipulate them.<sup>92</sup>

The manifestation of Ogou St. Jacques could also reference the association between Ogou and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who is closely connected with the spirit in both oral and visual tradition.<sup>93</sup> Amina Simeon's *Saint Jacques Vodou Flag* depicts the *lwa* seated on a white horse, dressed in a gray garment as well as gray cap with a red and yellow circle on the front, backed by a gold nimbus, and holding a machete and shield (Fig. 4.2). The horse is dressed with a green, yellow, and red saddle, and appears to trample the figures beneath it. In the upper right corner of the flag, a red flag with white cross is present, floating in the air near the spirit's left arm that wields a machete. The color red, seen throughout the flag, along with the machete, follows the tradition of Ogou depictions established in early Vodou practice. This depiction of Ogou is analogous to Catholic depictions of St. James, the patron of crusades and cavalrymen, who is traditionally depicted on the horse.<sup>94</sup> The warrior aspects of the *lwa* also illustrate the violent traits associated with the Yoruban origins of Ogou.

Depictions of Saint James as a “Moor-slayer” depict him on horseback as a warrior. Figure 4.7 follows these traditions, showing the saint on a white horse that tramples the Moors, who have fallen to James’ sword. The saint wears a dark garment with a white collar, and raises a sword over his head to strike down his enemy. A depiction of the Virgin Mary appears in the upper right corner. In comparison, the depiction of Ogou in Figure 4.6 shows the spirit on a white horse, in a dark blue garment with white collar, a shield in one hand and sword in the other. No figures appear around him; instead red sequins surround him. Red is the color associated with Ogou, and is seen in many aspects of the flag.<sup>95</sup>

The aspects of Ogou that are conveyed through ritual objects and other elements of Vodou material culture are incorporated to enhance the spiritual experiences of the practitioners. Similarly, aspects of Christian iconography were borrowed from pagan traditions in order to heighten the experience and the understanding of newly converted Christians. Particularly in the first two hundred years of Christian pictorial development, Christian imagery incorporated many aspects of pagan mythological traditions (seen in statues, mosaics, silverware, etc.), as evidenced in the mosaic of Christ as Sol in Figure 1.1.<sup>96</sup> While this coalescence of themes made the practice more relatable to potential converts to Christianity, it did not serve to influence all doctrines and beliefs of Christians. In an analogous manner, while Vodou shows influence from Catholicism, these similarities do not shape the entirety of the manifestations of the *lwa*. These characteristics of the various manifestations exhibit both the African lineage of the spirits, syncretism with Catholic iconography, as well as attributes that are singularly Haitian.

The spirit Ogou’s association with Haitian culture allows scholars to determine which aspects of the Vodou pantheon illustrate distinctly Haitian influence, as opposed to aspects syncretized from Catholicism or from African religions. The theatrical nature of the ceremonies enacted for the spirit allows the practitioners to visualize the character of Ogou. Analyzing the

characteristics of the spirit Ogou were based in African tradition, coupled with determining which aspects have developed through the influence of Haitian culture allows this study to more clearly realize which traits were the results of syncretism with Catholicism. Ogou's role as a warrior *lwa* exhibits similar visual traditions seen in medieval depictions of warrior saints, as evidenced in depictions of St. George (Fig. 4.8). The spirit Ogou Sen Jak acts as a locus of syncretism with the Catholic figure of St. John, with a church gathering for the Mass of St. James acting as the height of the festival.<sup>97</sup>

Depictions of Ogou have also been linked with Christian figures such as St. Maurice.<sup>98</sup> St. Maurice was from southern Egypt, and refused to massacre a group of Germanic Christians while leading a Roman legion during the rule of Diocletian. He was martyred in Agauman of present-day Switzerland.<sup>99</sup> He became a symbol of Germanic military strength in 1007 after the city of Magdeburg survived an attack by the Slavs, leading locals to believe that St. Maurice had interceded for them.<sup>100</sup> A second theory relates to the tradition for depicting St. Maurice as a black man, which emerged around 1240-50 and continued as the standard for representations of him in Magdeburg, Halle, and Halberstadt until the seventeenth century.<sup>101</sup> The idea of blackness also emerges with the expansion of Christianity into Africa, particularly in Ethiopia. Scholars have looked at the Horn of Africa as a center point of syncretism for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, the "higher religions."<sup>102</sup> By 1000 C.E. Maurice was rivaled by St. George in popularity of warrior saints.<sup>103</sup> The depiction of these warrior saints illustrates the origins of this "type," as well as exhibits the medieval tradition for depicting Blackness. The warrior portrayal of these figures was later syncretized into Vodou iconography for depictions of Ogou.

The association between Ogou and St. George could stem from the spread of Christianity to Africa during the Middle Ages. The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Ethiopian double diptych icon pendant of Mary and Christ on one panel, with St. George on the opposite panel, shows the influence of the

spread of Christianity in Ethiopia and the importance of St. George to that group (Fig. 4.11).

Trade routes developed through modern day Ethiopia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as the country is located on an important trade route between the Roman Empire in Europe, and the Red Sea en route to India. The Christianization of the region also worked to unify the various regions in the kingdom of Aksum (modern day Ethiopia), which aided in the process of developing a coin system in the area, leading Aksum to have a very prosperous and successful economy.<sup>104</sup>

The aspects of Ogou that make him distinctly Haitian, influenced by the Haitian Revolution and the repression of the people by tyrants such as Charles Duvalier, show the ways in which Vodou became more than simply a religion that borrowed from the traditions of others. While it combines aspects of syncretism from Christianity and the practices of tribes in West Africa, Vodou has developed into a practice that is unique to its New World followers. Ogou's role as the warrior *lwa* of the Vodou pantheon is illustrated through a pictorial tradition that exhibits African and Catholic influence alongside the elements that originated in Haiti.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

My introduction to the vibrant culture and traditions of the people of Haiti started with listening to recollections of my grandfather's mission work in the country. He spoke of the passionate and welcoming people he encountered there, and their resiliency despite the hardships faced by the country. The economic hardships faced by the Haitian people have influenced the materials used by the artists in the production of Vodou flags. The beads, thread, and vibrant fabrics reflect the vitality of the culture and the impassioned nature of Vodou practice.

Vodou flags and Vodou iconography are not only symbolic of the syncretic nature of Vodou development, but also act as symbols of the hybrid nature of the practice. This cultural hybridity, through the interaction between Catholic tradition, African religion, and uniquely Haitian experience, allows Vodou and its visual culture to form an identity distinct to Haitian practitioners. The flags discussed in the preceding chapters exhibit these moments of syncretism with Catholic tradition, while often modifying them to reflect the people of Haiti, through objects, skin coloring, or the scenery surrounding the *lwa*. Vodou, and its iconography, serve as evidence of the cultural crossroads; a hybridity of traditions from French Catholic culture, West African religion, and distinctly Haitian history.

Elements of the cultural hybridity in Vodou are also evident in the spirit Damballah, the spirit viewed as the creator of life. The Christian saint is depicted as an older man, with a white beard, standing on a rocky cliffside with snakes around his feet (Figure 5.1). The Vodou practitioners viewed this icon as a representation of their spirit Damballah, seen in figure 5.2,

who is depicted as an older man and has an association with snakes.<sup>105</sup> These associations exemplify notions of cultural re-identification of iconography, wherein the Catholic figure takes on a new persona and meaning when discussed as Damballah, the high *lwa* of the Vodou pantheon, as opposed to the figure of St. Patrick.

Vodou's role as a form of "cultural crossroads" is evidenced in the Vodou flags, as well as in the names and roles of the spirits. Legba, the link between Vodou practitioners and the Vodou pantheon, consolidates the traditions associated with Elegba from African tradition and the Catholic portrayal of St. Peter and Lazarus, along with aspects that make him unique to Haiti through his depiction with the many colored hat and cane. Legba's parallel manifestation Calfou (the Creolized version of the Carrefour) syncretizes the French word for "crossroads." Calfou is one of the most powerful spirits in the Haitian pantheon, and is seen as the *lwa* that presides over the crossroads and spirits of the dead. Like Legba, Calfou wears red and black, or red and purple garments, and is associated with dark glasses and a tall black hat. During ceremonies Legba or Carrefour manifest by "riding" a Vodou practitioner, who, once possessed, begins to walk with a cane.<sup>106</sup>

The facets of spirit manifestations that evince inherently Haitian traits suggests that the aspects of acculturating themes from African or Christian conventions was not solely a tool to hide Vodou, but a use of syncretism to further develop the practice and posit it within these pre-established religions. At the same time these modifications created visual traditions that reflect the social, political, and economic ordeals faced by those in Haiti. The Vodou flags exhibit the interaction between the Catholic iconography, West African religious roots, and the modifications made to these traditions in order for the spirits to better relate to the needs and experiences of the Haitian Vodou practitioners. This uniqueness affirms the independent capability of the people of Haiti in creating a culture that is not just mimesis of African tradition

that incorporated Christianity in attempts to conceal the practice, but is exemplary of the role of the practitioners' deliberate choices of syncretism of these other practices in order to create a visual culture that reflected the uniquely Haitian experience.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The *lwa*, sometimes spelled *loa*, are the Haitian (as well as New Orleans *Voodoo*) Vodou spirits.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this study, I will use the spellings of *Vodou*, *lwa*, *Ezili*, and *Petwo*, as seen in Joan Dayan's texts, as opposed to prior spellings of the terms, *Voodoo*, *loa*, *Erzulie*, and *Petro*. Dayan uses these terms in order to more closely approximate the Haitian Creole terms. In her texts, she attempts to use easily accessible phonemic orthography in order to parallel the Haitian novelists and ethnographers who use French translations of Haitian Creole. The previously used terms *Voodoo*, *loa*, *Erzulie*, and *Petro* reflect Gallicized Creole spellings. Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998) xxiii. See also: Ina Fandrich, "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou and New Orleans Voodoo," *Journal of Black Studies* 37 (2007), 775-91, and: Aisha Khan, "Islam, Vodou, and the Making of the Afro-Atlantic," *New West Indian Guide* 86 (2012), 29.

<sup>3</sup> James Graham Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 1980), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Karen McCarthy Brown, "Systematic Remembering, Systematic Forgetting: Ogou in Haiti," in *Africa's Ogun: Second, Expanded Edition: Old World and New*, edited Sandra T. Barnes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 86.

<sup>6</sup> Bantu is a dialect spoken throughout most of central and south Africa; For more information on the language, see Malcolm Guthrie, *The classification of the Bantu languages* (published for the International African Institute by the Oxford University Press, 1948), 81-92.

<sup>7</sup> Lilith Dorsey, *Voodoo and Afro Caribbean Paganism* (New York: Citadel, 2005), 33.

<sup>8</sup> Leslie G. Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Laënnec Hurbon, "Haitian Vodou, Church, State, and Anthropology," *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures* 8 (1999): 28.

<sup>10</sup> Kiev Martinez, *Papa Legba: God of the Crossroads* (Raleigh: Lulu Press, 2015) 58.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Arthur Polk, *Haitian Vodou Flags* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1997) 7-9.

<sup>12</sup> Priscilla Frank, Interview: Everhart Museum Curator Nezka Pfeifer, “The Hypnotic (and Very Glittery) Beauty of Haitian Vodou Flags,” *The Huffington Post*, October 1, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz, “Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone?” *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21 (2015), 1-42.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Publishing, 2009) 50-53.

<sup>15</sup> Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 13. Information on postcolonial theory as it relates to Medieval studies can be found in: Bruce W. Holsinger, “Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and the Genealogies of Critique,” *Speculum* 77 (2002): 1195-1227, and Ananya Jahanar Kabir and Deanne Williams, *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), x.

<sup>17</sup> Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer*, 19.

<sup>18</sup> In 1926, Melvin Herskovits’s anthropological monograph on the development of slavery in the Caribbean and American South was written in an effort to analyze how conditions of biological or cultural differences influenced the slaves’ responses to life in America. While his and many similar studies provide in depth discussion of the development of Vodou in Haiti and Louisiana, most studies look at it as a phenomenon contained to Vodou itself. As discussed in research by John Thornton, many of the historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and art historians who have studied the progression of Vodou as a religion have viewed the practices of African American practitioners of Vodou to be the result of Christian attempts to change their beliefs. See Gershenhorn, *Melville J. Herskovits*, 70. And John K. Thornton, “On the Trail of Voodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas,” *The Americas* 44, no 3 (Jan 1988), 261.

<sup>19</sup> It has been argued that slaves in Haiti adopted Catholic themes into Vodou because they believed that spirits possessed Catholic priests when they preached, in the same manner as in African religions, where the priest or priestess is believed to be possessed during rituals. Jerry Gershenhorn. *Melville J. Herskovits and the racial politics of knowledge*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 83.

<sup>20</sup> John K. Thornton, “On the Trail of Voodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas,” *The Americas* 44, no 3 (Jan 1988): 261.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984): 176.

<sup>22</sup> Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola A Vodou Priestess in Haiti* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Donald Cosentino, *Divine Revolution: the Paintings of Edouard Duval Carrié* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2004). Gerald Alexis' *Peintres Haitiens* examines three hundred Haitian paintings, and discusses the significance of different symbols and icons seen in the imagery. This is an invaluable source that catalogues Haitian painters, including those that incorporate themes of Vodou into their work. Gérald Alexis, *Peintres haitiens (English Version)*, (Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous interview by Claudio Zanchettin. "The Church in Haiti." *New Blackfriars* 52 (Aug 1971) 363-67.

<sup>25</sup> Kate Ramsey, "Vodou, History, and New Narratives," *Transition* 3, (2013): 36.

<sup>26</sup> Joan Dayan, "Erzulie: A Women's History of Haiti, Research in African Literatures" Vol. 25, No. 2, Special Issue: Caribbean Literature (Summer, 1994), 5-31.

<sup>27</sup> Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History and the Gods*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Jane Boisvert, "In the Image of Erzulie Fréda: Literary Examples of the Goddess of Beauty, Love, and Support," *The Journal of Haitian Studies* 13 (2007): 99-109.

<sup>29</sup> Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, "Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995) 195.

<sup>30</sup> Roderick Conway Morris, "The Conversion of Rome" *International Herald Tribune*, 2001, 1.

<sup>31</sup> For information on similarities of Christ and Heracles, see Friedrich Pfister, "Heracles and Christus," *ARW* 34 (1937): 42-60. Pfister addresses the idea that Heracles' death and subsequent elevation to divinity was the model for the portrayal of Christ as a spirit.

<sup>32</sup> Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, *A History of Pagan Europe*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 75. On the reaction of early Christian writers towards Roman temples see Garth Fowden, "Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire A.D. 320-435," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 29 (1978): 53-78. See also: Helen Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes Toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 47-61, and: Paul Carus, "Pagan Elements of Christianity and the Significance of Jesus," *The Monist* 12 (1902): 216-25.

<sup>33</sup> Litwa, *Jesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus As a Mediterranean God*) 25.

<sup>34</sup> Kimberly Rachel Grunke, "The Effect of Christianity upon the British Celts," *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research* 11, (2008): 1-5. Earlier research on Christian symbolism in Great Britain and Ireland can be found in J. Romilly Allen, *Early Christian Symbolism in Great Britain and Ireland: The Romano British Period and Celtic Monuments with an Account of Early Christian Symbolism in Foreign Countries* [1885] (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Neidermeyer, "A Return to Orthodoxy A History of Passover vs. Easter" 1.

<sup>36</sup> Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola A Vodou Priestess in Haiti* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, New York: Vintage, 1894.

<sup>38</sup> This can be seen in mainstream films such as *Pirates of the Caribbean* and Pat Robertson's 2010 response to the earthquakes in Haiti. For more information, see: Kate Ramsey, "Vodou, History, and New Narratives," *Transition* 3, (2013): 36. Ramsey's text addresses an incident from the 2010 earthquake in Haiti in which American televangelist Pat Robertson explained to viewers that the catastrophic earthquake that brought devastation and chaos to the people of Haiti was brought on because of the actions of slaves during the Haitian Revolution who had made a so-called "pact with the devil."

<sup>39</sup> Brown, *Mama Lola*, 316.

<sup>40</sup> Ina Fandrich, "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou," 781.

<sup>41</sup> Ingrid Tolia Monson, *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective* (East Sussex: The Psychology Press, 2003) 271.

<sup>42</sup> Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* 1-115. More on Post-Colonial Theory can be found in work by Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> George Eaton Simpson, "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, 42 (1940): 242, as well as Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola*, 67-317.

<sup>44</sup> Fandrich, Ina, "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou," 775, and Lilith Dorsey, *Vodou and Afro Caribbean Paganism*, 33.

<sup>45</sup> Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap?" 261-62.

<sup>46</sup> Joan Wescott and Peter Morton-Williams, "The Symbolism and Ritual Context of the Yoruban Laba Shango," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 92 (1962): 23-37. See also: Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap?" 261-62.

<sup>47</sup> Brown, *Mama Lola*, 316. See also: Yvonne Daniel, *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005) 71, and Fandrich, Ina Fandrich, "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou," 775.

<sup>48</sup> Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap?" 265-67.

<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey E. Anderson, *The Voodoo Encyclopedia: Magic, Ritual, and Religion*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015) 77. Martinez, *Papa Legba*, 1-64.

<sup>50</sup> Carolyn Kinder Carr, “Aspects of the Iconography of Medieval Art of Western Europe to the Early Thirteenth Century,” (PhD dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1978) 14-18. The keys are a reference to the passage from Matthew 16:9, in which Christ tells Peter: “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven.” See Figure 1.

<sup>51</sup> Fernando Lanzi and Gioia Lanzi, *Saints and Their Symbols: Recognizing Saints in Art and in Popular Images* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004) 56-59.

<sup>52</sup> Kiev Martinez, *Papa Legba: God of the Crossroads* (Raleigh: Lulu Press, 2015.), 1-64.

<sup>53</sup> Brown, *Mama Lola*, 46, 277, 316.

<sup>54</sup> Leslie Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods*, 108.

<sup>55</sup> For more information on the spirits and their Christian counterparts, see Margarite Fernández Olmos, *Creole religions of the Caribbean* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998) 295-96.

<sup>57</sup> Fay Weldon, “Samson and His Women,” in *Out of the Garden: Women Writers on the Bible* edited by Celina Spiegel and Christina Buchmann, (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994), 81.

<sup>58</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 296.

<sup>59</sup> Brown, *Mama Lola*, 221.

<sup>60</sup> Dorsey, *Vodou and Afro Caribbean Paganism*, 34.

<sup>61</sup> Joan Dayan, “Erzulie: A Women’s History in Haiti,” *Research in African Literatures* 25 (1994) 7.

<sup>62</sup> Dayan, “Erzulie: A Women’s History in Haiti,” 7.

<sup>63</sup> Dayan, “Erzulie: A Women’s History in Haiti,” 9.

<sup>64</sup> Owusu, *Vodou Rituals: A User's Guide*, 10. Other associations can be found in Lilith Dorsey’s *Vodou and Afro Caribbean Paganism*, which includes associations between Ezili and Saint Anne, Mater Dolorosa, and Mater Salvatoris. Dorsey, *Voodoo and Afro Caribbean Paganism*, (35).

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Murphy, *Osun Across The Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001) 7-97.

<sup>66</sup> David Cosentino, “Vodou Vatican: A Prolegomenon for Understanding Authority in a Synthetic Religion,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 39, (1993): 103.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen Glazier, "Caribbean Pilgrimages: A Typology." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 22 (1983): 317.

<sup>68</sup> Stephen Glazier, "Caribbean Pilgrimages: A Typology," 317.

<sup>69</sup> Lydia Polgreen, "Souvenance Journal; An Easter Voodoo Festival With Political Undertones," *The New York Times* (New York City, NY): 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Terry Rey, "The Politics of Patron Sainthoof in Haiti: 500 years of Iconic Struggle," *The Catholic Historical Review* 88 (2002): 528.

<sup>71</sup> Kameelah Martin Samuel, "Disney's Tia Dalma: A Critical Interrogation of an Imagineered 'Priestess,'" *Black Women, Gender + Families* 6 (2012): 114.

<sup>72</sup> Brown, *Mama Lola*, 223.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Buxton, *The Complete World of Greek Mythology*, London: Thames & Hudson (2004): 142.) and Ilya Dines, "The Copying and Imitation of Images in Medieval Bestiaries," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 167 (2014): 76.

<sup>74</sup> Karen McCarthy Brown, "The Power to Heal: Women Healers in Haiti," in *Daughters of the Caliban: Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century*, 124 – 127 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) 124. See also: Samuel, "Disney's Tia Dalma," 114.

<sup>75</sup> Brown, *Mama Lola*, 220-21.

<sup>76</sup> Dayan, "Erzulie: A Women's History in Haiti," 11.

<sup>77</sup> Thompson, 181.

<sup>78</sup> White, "Espousing Ezili: Images of a Lwa, Reflections of the Haitian Woman," 62.

<sup>79</sup> Robert G. Armstrong, "The Etymology of the Word 'Ògún,'" in *Africa's Ogun: Second, Expanded Edition: Old World and New*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 3. See also: Sandra T. Barnes, "The Many Faces of Ogou" in *Africa's Ogou*, 7-9.

<sup>80</sup> Karen McCarthy Brown, "Systematic Remembering, Systematic Forgetting: Ogou in Haiti," 71.

<sup>81</sup> Margarite Fernandez Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santeria to Obeah and Espiritismo*, (New York: New York University Press, 2003) 110 – 117.

<sup>82</sup> Fandrich, Ina Fandrich, "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou," 781.

<sup>83</sup> Owusu, *Vodou Rituals*, 37. More information on Ogou objects can be found in Dorsey, *Vodou and Afro Caribbean Paganism*, 45.

<sup>84</sup> Sandra T. Barnes, "The Many Faces of Ogou" in *Africa's Ogun*, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Mohammad, "The Sign of the Loa," 127, and Brown, *Mama Lola*, 104.

<sup>86</sup> In March 1896, President Hyppolite who, on his way to end a rebellion led by Mérişier Jeannis, an guerilla rebel who controlled the Jacmel region of Haiti, died of a heart attack and fell off of his horse. Prior to his work during the Jacmel rebellion, Hyppolite successfully enacted a coup d'état and took the presidency from General François Legitime in 1889. See Michael Largey, *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism*, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Brown, 96.

<sup>88</sup> Carole Boyce Davies, "Dessalines, Jean-Jacques(1758-1806)" in *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, Vol 1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Publishing, 2008), 380.

<sup>89</sup> Brown, "Systematic Remembering, Systematic Forgetting: Ogou in Haiti," in *Africa's Ogun: Second, Expanded Edition: Old World and New*, 65-68.

<sup>90</sup> Consentino, "Repossession: Ogun in Folklore and Literature," 380.

<sup>91</sup> Largey, *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> Brown, 110.

<sup>93</sup> The association between Ogou and St. Jacques is also seen in the occurrence of Ogou ceremonies continually for several days before the Feast of St. Jacques, which occurs on July 25. Donald J. Consentino, "Repossession: Ogun in Folklore and Literature," in *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, Vol 1. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Publishing, 2008) 299.

<sup>94</sup> Lanzi and Gioia Lanzi, *Saints and Their Symbols*, 64.

<sup>95</sup> Owusu, *Vodou Rituals*, 37.

<sup>96</sup> Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, "Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995) 195.

<sup>97</sup> Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap?" 271.

<sup>98</sup> Ingrid Tolia Monson, *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective* (East Sussex: The Psychology Press, 2003) 271.

<sup>99</sup> Stefan Goodwin, *Africa in Europe: Antiquity into the Age of Global Expansion* (Lanham: Lexington Publishing, 2009) 98.

<sup>100</sup> Jean Devisse, "A Sanctified Black: Maurice," in *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*, ed. Kimberly Pinder, 37.

<sup>101</sup> Devisse, "A Sanctified Black: Maurice," 37.

<sup>102</sup> Ulrich Baukämper, "Aspects of Religious Syncretism in Southern Ethiopia," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22 (1992) 195.

<sup>103</sup> Goodwin, *Africa in Europe*, 98.

<sup>104</sup> Ross, Emma George. "African Christianity in Ethiopia". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

<sup>105</sup> Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 176.

<sup>106</sup> Ina Fandrich, "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou and New Orleans Voodoo," *Journal of Black Studies* 37 (2007): 783.



## REFERENCES

- Anderson, Jeffrey E.. *The Voodoo Encyclopedia: Magic, Ritual, and Religion*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015.
- Alexis, G  rald. *Peintres haitiens (English Version.)* Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art, 2000.
- Allen, J. Romilly. *Early Christian Symbolism in Great Britain and Ireland: The Romano British Period and Celtic Monuments with an Account of Early Christian Symbolism in Foreign Countries, 1885*. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004.
- Bhaba, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.
- Boisvert, Jayne. "In the Image of Erzulie Fr  da: Literary Examples of the Goddess of Beauty, Love, and Support." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 13, no. 1 (2007) pp. 99-109.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn, With a New Foreword by Claudine Michel*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2001.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. "Review," Review of *Our Lady of Class Struggle: The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Haiti*, by Terry Rey. *Church History* 70, March 2001.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. "Systematic Remembering, Systematic Forgetting: Ogou in Haiti," in *Africa's Ogun: Second, Expanded Edition: Old World and New* 65-89, edited Sandra T. Barnes Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. *Tracing the Spirit: Ethnographic Essays on Haitian Art*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.
- Burke, Peter. *Cultural Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Publishing, 2009.
- Buxton, Richard. *The Complete World of Greek Mythology*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- Chireau, Yvonne. "Conjure and Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: Religious Elements in African American Magic." *Religion and American Culture* 7, no. 2 (1997) pp. 225-246.
- Cosentino, Donald. "Who is that Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap? Transformations of Eshu in the Old and New World Mythologies." *The Journal of American Folklore* 100, no. 397 (1987): pp.261-75.

- Cosentino, Donald. *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History: 1995.
- Cosentino, David. "Vodou Vatican: A Prolegomenon for Understanding Authority in a Synthetic Religion," *Caribbean Quarterly* 39, (1993): 100-07.
- Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Dines, Ilya. "The Copying and Imitation of Images in Medieval Bestiaries," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 167 (2014): 70-82.
- Desmangles, Leslie. *The Faces of the Gods*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Devisse, Jean. "A Sanctified Black: Maurice," in *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*, 37-69. ed. Kimberly Pinder, Abingdon, Routledge, 2013.
- Dorsey, Lilith. *Voodoo and Afro Caribbean Paganism*. New York: Citadel, 2005.
- Fandrich, Ina J. "Yoruba Influences on Haitian Vodou and New Orleans Voodoo." *Journal of Black Studies* 37 (2007) 775-91.
- Felix, Emmanuel. *Understanding Haitian Voodoo*. Camarillo: Xulon Press, 2009.
- Gates, Henry Louis. *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume II: From the Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery". Part I: From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood*. Edited by David Bindman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Gershenhorn, Jerry. *Melville J. Herskovits and the racial politics of knowledge*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.
- Glazier, Stephen. "Caribbean Pilgrimages: A Typology." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 22 (1983): 316-25.
- Goodwin, Stefan. *Africa in Europe: Antiquity into the age of Global Expansion*. Lanham: Lexington Publishing, 2009.
- Grunke, Kimberly Rachel. "The Effect of Christianity upon the British Celts," *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research* 11, (2008): 1-5.
- Holloway, Joseph. *Africanisms in American Culture* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Hurbon, Laënnec. "Vodou: A Faith for Individual, Family, and Community From Dieu dans le vaudou haïtien." *Callaloo* 15 (1992): 787-796

- Jernegan, Marcus M. "Slavery and conversion in the American Colonies." *The American Historical Review* 21, no. 3 (1916) 504-27.
- Largey, Michael, *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Lanzi, Fernando, and Gioia Lanzi. *Saints and Their Symbols: Recognizing Saints in Art and in Popular Images*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004.
- Maltese, Emanuela. "What is the Truth? Ezili, or the Power of Feminist Love." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 16 (2010): 87-94.
- Meyer, Birgit, and Peter Pels, *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Mohammad, Patricia. "The Sign of the Loa," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 9 (2005): 124-49.
- Monson, Ingrid Tolia. *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective*. East Sussex: The Psychology Press, 2003.
- Murphy, Joseph. *Osun Across The Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Olmos, Margarite Fernández. *Creole religions of the Caribbean*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Owusu, Heike. *Voodoo Rituals: A User's Guide*, New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 2003.
- Polgreen, Lydia. "Souvenance Journal; An Easter Voodoo Festival With Political Undertones," *The New York Times* (New York City, NY, 2004).
- Raboteau, Albert. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Ramsey, Kate. "From 'Voodooism' to 'Vodou': Changing a US Library of Congress Subject Heading." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 18 (2012) 14-25.
- Ramsey, Kate. "Vodou, History, and New Narratives." *Transition*, no. 111 (2013): 31-41.
- Rey, Terry. "'The Politics of Patron Sainthood in Haiti: 500 years of Iconic Struggle,'" *The Catholic Historical Review* 88 (2002): 519-45.
- Rigaud, Milo. *The Secrets of Vodou*. San Francisco: City Lights Publishing, 1969.

- Rountree, Kathryn. "Localizing Neo-Paganism: integrating global and indigenous traditions in a Mediterranean Catholic society" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17 (2011): 846-72.
- Samuel, Kameelah Martin. "'Disney's Tia Dalma: A Critical Interrogation of an Imagineered 'Priestess,'" *Black Women, Gender + Families* 6 (2012): 97-122.
- Sasser, Elizabeth Skidmore. *The World of Spirits and Ancestors in the Art of Western Sub-Saharan Africa*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995.
- Simpson, George Eaton. "The Vodun Service in Haiti" *American Anthropologist*, 42 (1940): 236-54.
- Suckale-Redlefsen, Gude. *Maurice, the Black Saint*. Houston, Zürich: Menil Foundation, 1987.
- Thompson, Robert Farris. *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy*. New York: Vintage, 1984.
- Thorton, John K. "On The Trail of Voodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas" *The Americas* 33, no. 3 (1988) 261-78.
- Valkonen, Markuu. "The Social History of Haitian Voodoo" in *Haitin taide ja voodoo/Haitian Art and Voodoo* 101-125. Jamaica: Retretti, 1998.
- Wescott, Joan, and Peter Morton-Williams. "The Symbolism and Ritual Context of the Yoruban Laba Shango," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 92 (1962): 23-37.
- White, Krista. "Espousing Ezili: Images of a Lwa, Reflections of the Haitian Woman." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 5/6 (1999-2000) 62-79.

FIGURES:



Figure 1.1. Rada Altar, 1995.  
University of California, Los Angeles. Fowler Museum of Cultural History.





Figure 1.2. Rome: Mausoleum of the Julii: Vault Mosaic: Christ as Sol Invictus. C. 250-275 A.D.  
Saint Peters Basilica, Vatican. Data from: University of California, San Diego.



Figure 2.1. Willie Cole, *Elegba*, paper mache, beads, wood, cowrie shells, c. 2000. 35 x 15.  
Larry Qualls Archive of Contemporary Art.



Figure 2.2. Staff for Eshu, ogo elegba Nigeria, wood, indigo dye, beads, 17", University of California, San Diego.







Figure 2.4. Evelyne Alcide, *Alegba*, 36"x51" Sequins and beads on fabric, c. 2010, Haitian Art Company, Key West Florida.



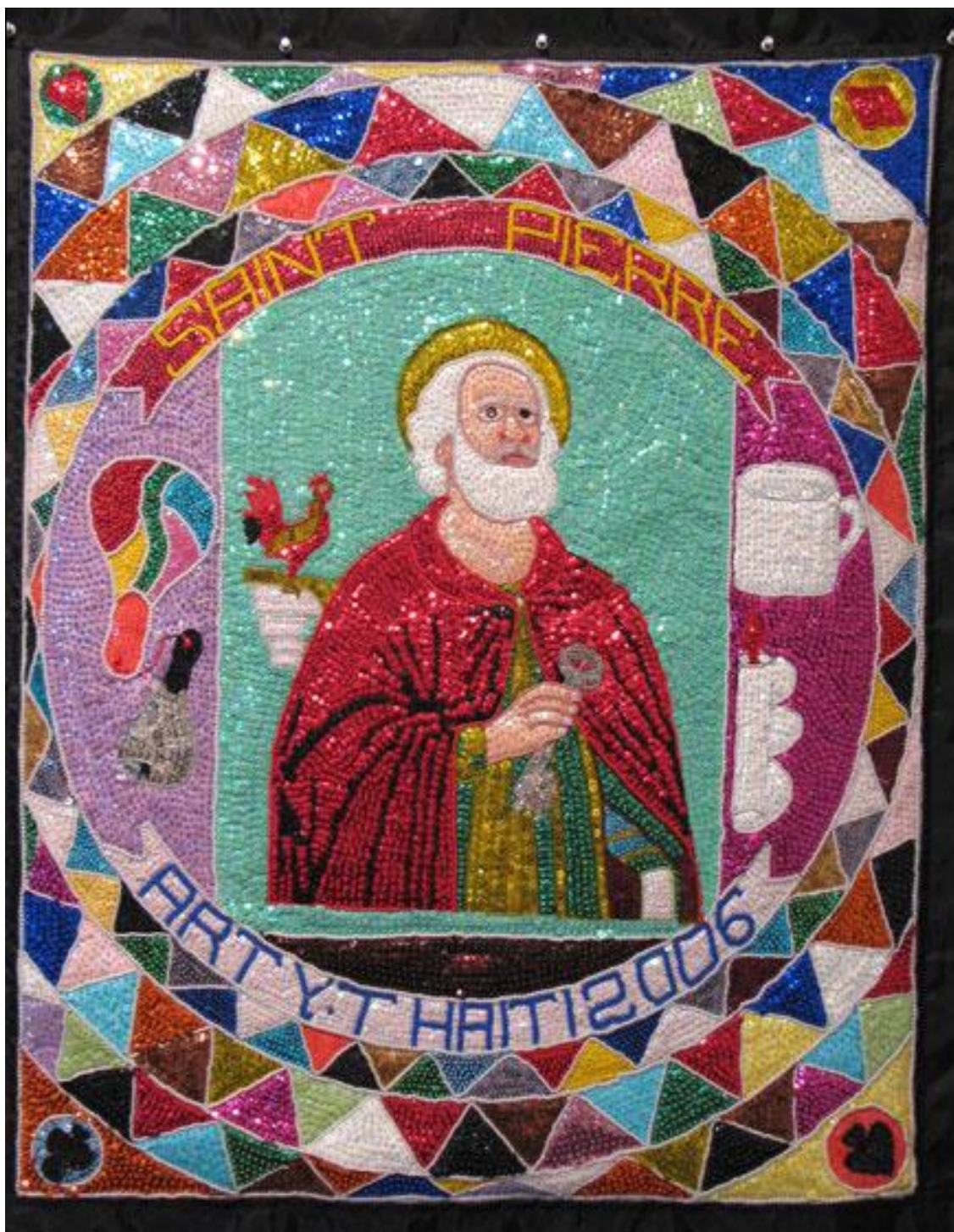


Figure 2.5. Yves Telemak, *St. Pierre Vodou Banner*, (40" x 33") Sequins and Beads on Fabric, 2006.  
Indigo Arts Gallery.





Figure 2.6. Artist Unknown, *St. Peter Icon Panel*, 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century, 20 1/2" x 15 3/8 inches.  
Mount Sinai Monastery.  
New York: The Archive for Research on Archetypal Symbolism



Figure 2.7. Triumphal Arch(Bearded beggar Lazarus), 1123,  
From the Church of S. Climent in Tahull.  
Archive for Research on Archetypal Symbolism

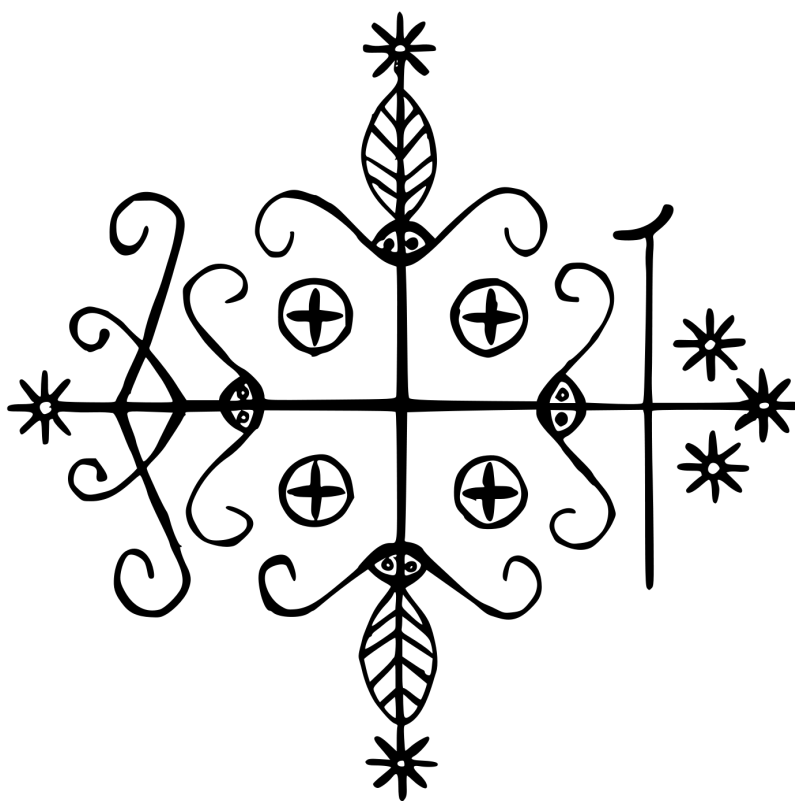


Figure 2.8. *Vevé* for Legba





Figure 3.1. *The Black Madonna of Jasna Gora*, Byzantine-Russian icon, 14<sup>th</sup> century, tempura on panel, Photographic Rights held by The Bridgeman Art Library.





Figure 3.2. Nadine Fortulus, *Erzulie Dantor Vodou Flag*, 2005, Sequins and beads on fabric, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. Last known: Indigo Arts Gallery





Figure 3.3. *Erzulie Freda Daroumin (Rada)*, Mid 20th century, Plastic, satin, silk, sequins, beads, burlap, thread, fringe, and ribbon 34 x 33 1/2 x 1/2.

Thomas Schultz Collection

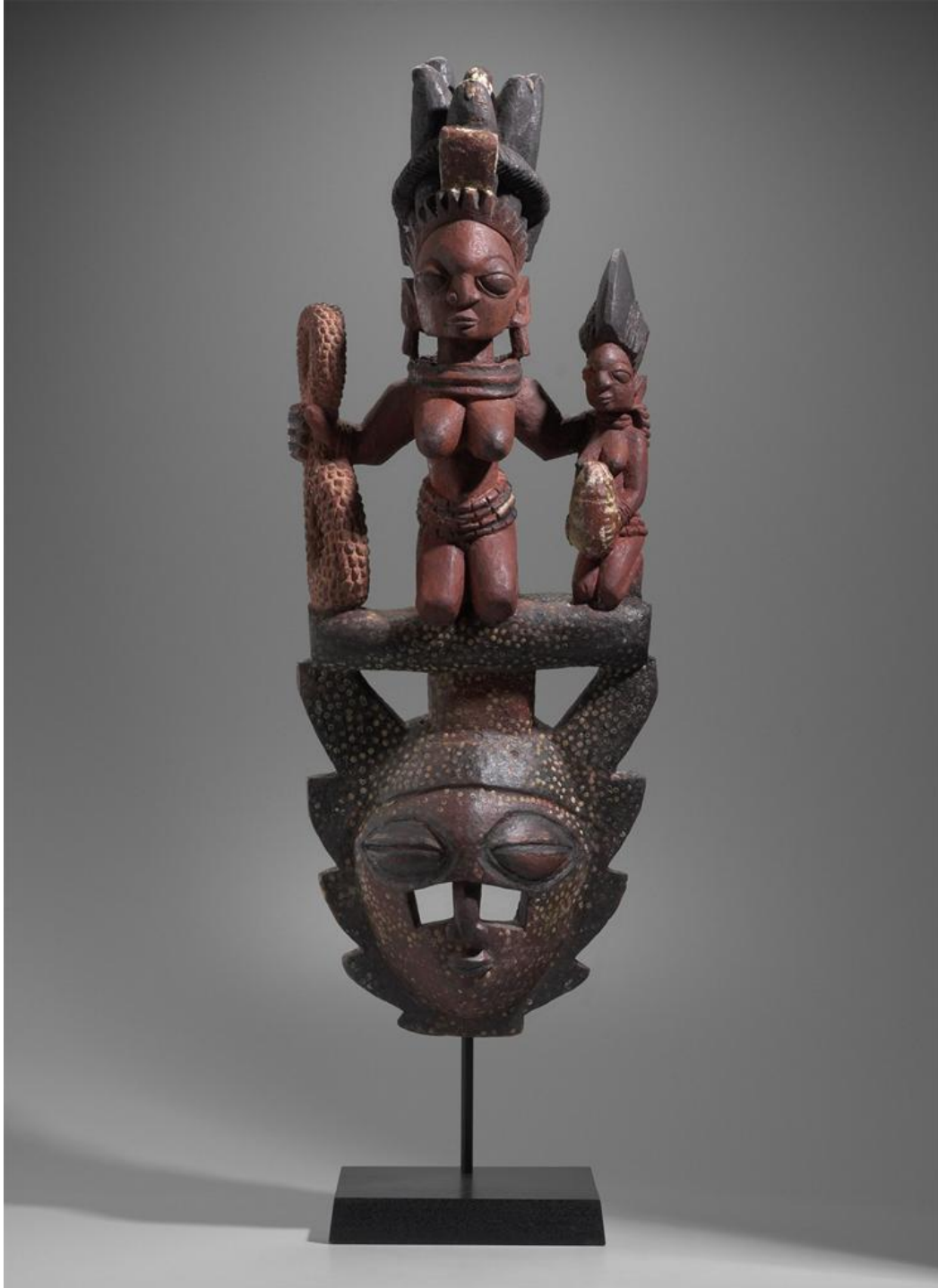


Figure 3.4. Mask, “The Owner of the Deep-Set Eyes” (Oloju Foforo), Surmounted by a Figure of the Goddess Oshun, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wood, pigment, string, and fiber. Yoruba, Ekiti subgroup, Ijeshu festival. Yale University Art Gallery, African Art .



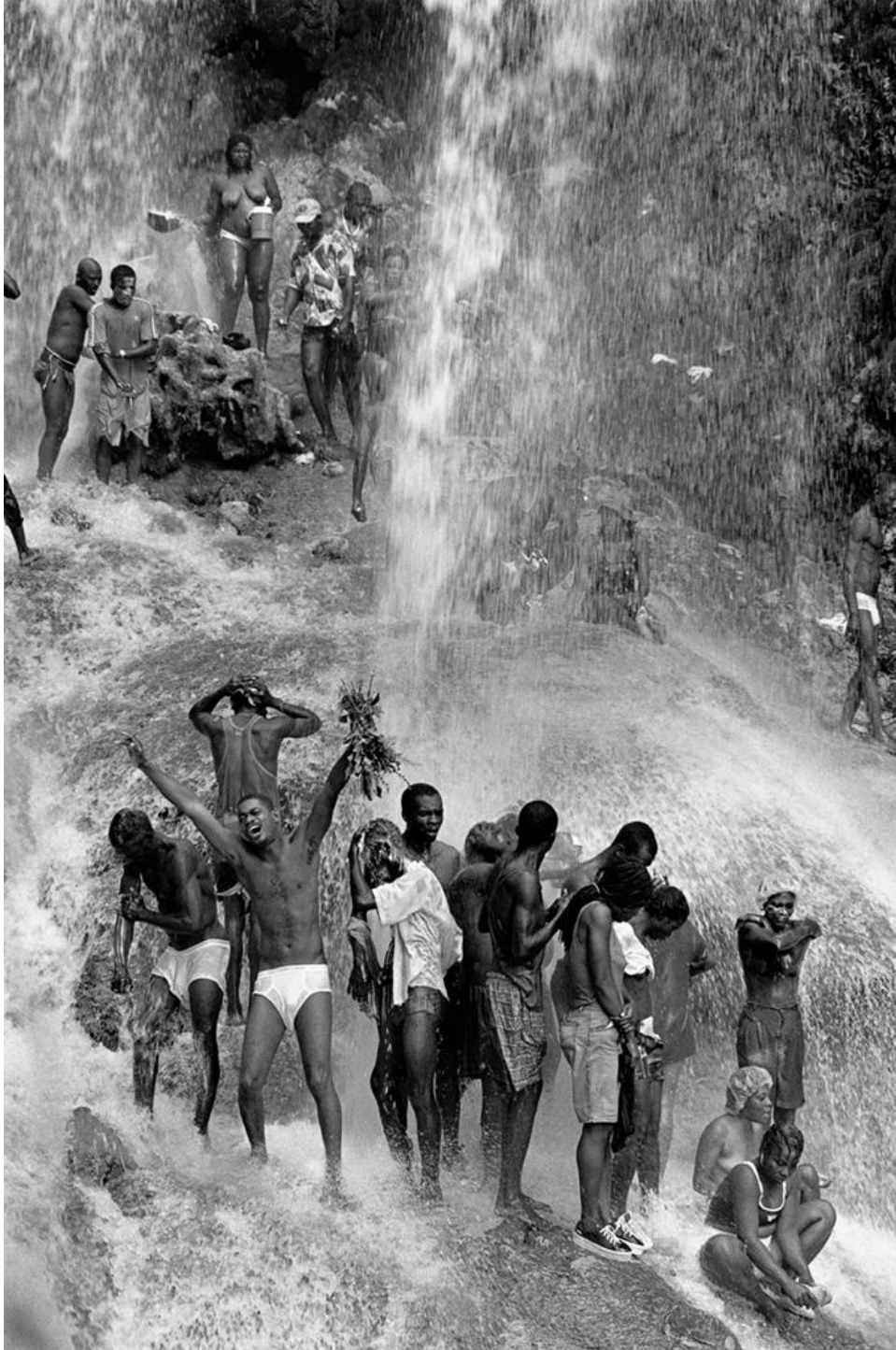


Figure 3.5. Cristina Garcia Roderio, *HAITI. Saut d'eau*, ArtStor, Magnum Photo Collection.



Figure 3.6. Roudy Azor, *La Sirene Beaded Drapo Vodou*, 2013, Sequins and beads on fabric, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Indigo Arts Gallery

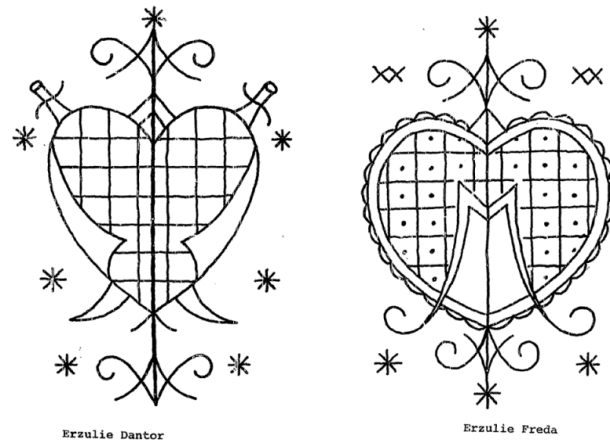


Fig 3.7. Veve For Ezili Danto and Ezili Freda





Figure 3.8. Yves Telemak, *Ezili Danthor Drapo Vodou*, 2002, Indigo Art Gallery.



Figure 4.1. *Ekiti Helmet Mask (Epa type) Yoruba representation of Ogun*, late 19<sup>th</sup> century.  
Wood, fiber, hide, nails, and encrustation. (44" x 19" x 25")  
Yale University Art Gallery.





Figure 4.2. Amina Simeon, *St. Jacques Vodou Flag*, 1998.  
Sequins and beads on Fabric, (23" x 26")  
Indigo Arts Gallery.



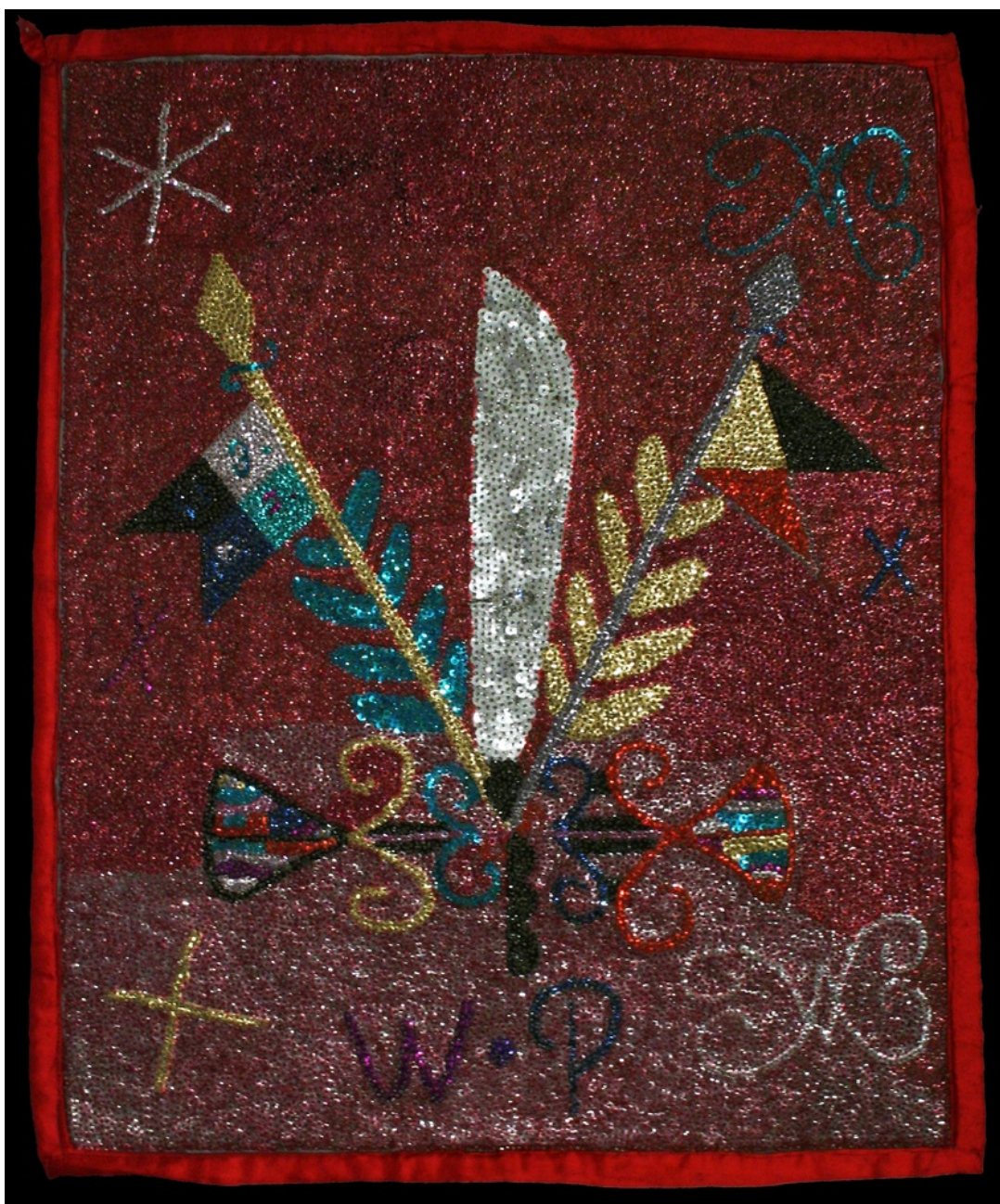


Figure 4.3. Ogou(Rada), mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.  
Satin, beads, sequins, polyester raffia, and thread. (33" x 26")  
Thomas Schultz Collection



Figure 4.4. *Vévé* for Ogou

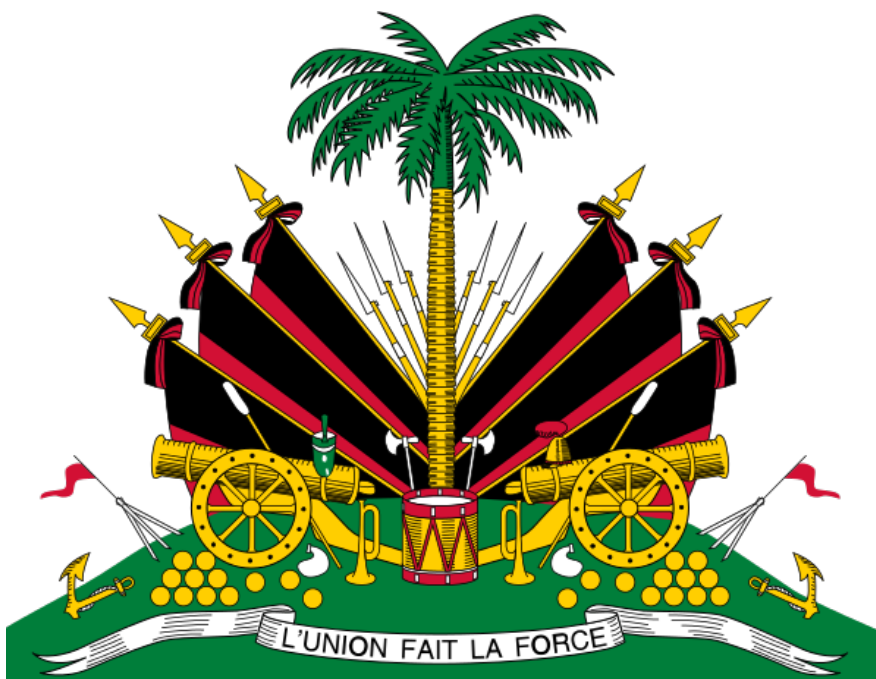


Figure 4.5. Haitian Coat of Arms (1964-1986)





Figure 4.6. *Ogoun(Rada)*, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.  
Cotton, sequins, beads, and thread.  
Thomas Schultz Collection



Figure 4.7. Artist Unknown, *Vodou flag (St. Jacques Majeur)*, 1980s.  
Haiti, satin, beads, sequins, paper chromolithograph,  
Collection of the Art Fund, Inc. at the Birmingham Museum of Art; Robert Cargo Folk Art  
Collection; Gift of Caroline Cargo.





Figure 4.8. Painting. *Saint James Matamoros (The Moor Slayer)*, 18<sup>th</sup> century  
Oil on canvas. 118 cm x 90 cm. Bolivia.  
Collection: Image of the Black in Western Art , Harvard University.



Figure 4.9. Statue. Full-length standing figure of St. Maurice (legs missing) in chain mail. C. 1240-1250. MAGDEBURG., Dom (St. Maurice and St. Catherine). Choir. Germany. Collection: Image of the Black in Western Art (Harvard University).



Figure 4.10. St. George Icon, (St. George Rescuing Emperor's Daughter), early 15<sup>th</sup> c.  
Enamel, Byzantine Icon,  
ARTstor Slide Gallery, University of California, San Diego.





Figure 4.11. Artist Unknown, *Diptych Icon with Saint George, and Mary and the Infant Christ*, Ethiopia, Early 15<sup>th</sup> century.  
Tempura on wood.





Figure 5.1. St. Patrick Driving the Snakes Out of Ireland



Figure 5.2. Damballah Et Aida Wedo (Rada) Mid 20th century Cotton, satin, thread, beads, and sequins 32 1/2 x 26 1/2 x 1/8.