# Contents

| List of Illustrations                          | page vii |
| Preface                                       | xi       |
| Acknowledgments                               | xvii     |
| 1 Preliminaries: An Iconography of Prehistoric Images | 1        |
| 2 Style                                       | 22       |
| 3 Form and Referent                            | 55       |
| 4 Configurational Analysis                    | 85       |
| 5 Ethnographic Analogy                        | 130      |
| 6 The Logic of Iconographic Method in Prehistory | 158      |
| Glossary                                      | 175      |
| References Cited                              | 179      |
| Index                                         | 195      |
### Illustrations

1. Petroglyph tableau near Millsboro, Pennsylvania  .... *page 5*
2. Birch-bark scroll drawing of the Ojibwa Midéwiwin medicine society  ... 8
3. The relationship between iconographic, semasiographic, and glottographic systems of visual communication   10
4. Drawing used by social psychologist William Hudson to test pictorial depth perception among Africans  ... 29
5. Engraved Mississippian shell gorgets from the southern Appalachian region  ... 31
6. Northwest Coast horn spoons with representational carvings  ... 36
7. Rollout drawing of a Coclé polychrome painted ceramic design, Panama  ... 42
8. Conventional layouts used in engraved Mississippian marine shell gorgets  ... 44
9. Olmec colossal head of basalt, La Venta site, Veracruz, Mexico  ... 45
10. Maya ceramic whistle from Jaina Island  ... 48
11. Reductive depiction and split representation in Northwest Coast imagery  ... 49
12. Engraved pottery vessel with in-the-round design layout, Moundville site, Alabama  ... 51
13. Two engraved depictions of the winged serpent theme on pottery, Moundville site, Alabama  ... 53
Illustrations

14  Detail from a pottery vessel engraving of the “crested bird” theme, Moundville site, Alabama .......................... 57
15  Duck or rabbit? An exercise in the psychology of perception ................................................................. 59
16  Aggressive fauna depicted in Coclé ceramic art, Panama .............................................................. 62
17  Carved wooden club depicting a killer whale, Tlingit, Northwest Coast ........................................... 67
18  House-front painting representing a killer whale, Kwakwaka’wakw, Northwest Coast ..................... 68
19  Two potential examples of personal reference (phantasmagoria) in prehistoric material ....................... 79
20  Northwest Coast filler motifs cataloged by George T. Emmons for the Tlingit .............................. 82
21  Maya filler motifs on the borders of a painted cylindrical vase .............................................................. 83
22  Use of similarly formatted prints of images on card stock, sorted on large tables, to explore distributions of suprastylistic features ................................................................. 91
23  Relationships among suprastylistic formal units, arranged by analytical level .................................... 92
24  Tableau of Olmec jade figurines as discovered in situ at the La Venta site, Veracruz, Mexico ............... 94
25  Host figure of earthenware from Teotihuacán ......................................................................................... 95
26  Identifying attributes in two images: The Raimondi Stela and a female figurine from Tennessee ........ 99
27  Conventional hand gestures in Moche fineline painting on pottery ....................................................... 101
28  Two images of the Teotihuacán Storm God ......................................................................................... 102
29  Pars pro toto Storm God in stone sculpture, Teotihuacán ...................................................... 103
30  The “four element group” in Teotihuacán mural imagery .......................................................... 105
31  Warriors parading captives who are naked and bound: A scene from the Warrior Narrative in Moche fineline painting on pottery .............................................................. 107
32  Obverse panel of the Thruston Tablet ......................................................................................... 108
Illustrations

33 Narrative condensation without repetition of characters:
   Painting from a Spartan cup and the Potter gorget from
   southeast Missouri ........................................... 109

34 Narrative condensation with repetition of characters:
   Detail from Benozzo Gozzoli, The Feast of Herod and the
   Beheading of St. John the Baptist ............................ 111

35 Narrative condensation with repetition of characters:
   Wrinkle Face combats marine monsters, Moche fineline
   painting on pottery ........................................... 111

36 Moche stirrup-spouted bottle with painting depicting a
   marsh plant .................................................... 113

37 Partial clay figurine wearing a large pectoral bearing the
   conventional “owl and weapons” emblem, Teotihuacán ... 114

38 Block color textile design from the Paracas Necrópolis,
   south coast of Peru ........................................... 115

39 Depiction of a raptorial bird on a carved stone cornice,
   Chavín de Huantar, Peru ..................................... 123

40 Pottery animal effigies used in ritual, Weeden Island
   culture, Florida .................................................. 135

41 Marine shell gorget design of the Cox Mound group,
   eastern Tennessee .............................................. 152

42 An iconographic workshop setting .......................... 161