

CULTURAL ARTIFACTS OF FROGS ON POSTAGE STAMPS

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Clues to past cultures are provided by artifacts that remain from ancient times. Artifacts provide historical evidence of symbols that were important to the culture in past times. Depiction of such handiwork in modern times, such as on postage stamps, reveal that such images are still important to the culture. Presented here are several images of amphibians from many countries that have been used to illustrate their stamps.

A stamp from the Caribbean British territory of Anguilla, issued in 2003, shows a worked shell ornament in the shape of a frog. Species of frogs endemic to Caribbean islands have loud mating calls that have become symbolic of fertility and well-being to the people of the islands.



Stone Carving
Brazil, 1989, Sc#2208

A stone carving of a frog on this stamp from Brazil represents 500 years since the discovery of America. In many cultures frogs represent good luck with the harvest as they are symbolic of rain which is needed to grow the crops.



Shell Carving
Anguilla, 2003, Sc#1098

The People's Republic of China issued a stamp in 1973 showing a bronze inkwell in the likeness of a frog or toad. Historically the frog represents wealth and good fortune in the Chinese culture. Many homes keep a statue of Ch'an Chu, the three-legged frog holding a coin in its mouth, to guarantee protection and prosperity for the household.



Gold Decoration
Colombia, 1978, Sc#C669

A stamp from Colombia has the image of a gold salamander from the South American Quimbaya culture, which was established in the area that is now Colombia. This civilization dates to the 4th Century CE and is known for spectacular work in gold.



Bronze Inkwell
China P.R., 1973, Sc#1137

Three stamps have been issued by Costa Rica with images of frogs that date to the pre-Columbian period. The 50-centimos stamp appears to have a carved artifact frog-shaped in stone. The 1989 and 2007 issues show the same or similar gold pendants shaped as a frog. The 4-centimos stamp was issued to commemorate five centuries since the discovery of America.



Stone Carving
Costa Rica, 1963, Sc#C384



Gold Pendant
Costa Rica, 1989, Sc#422



Gold Pendant
Costa Rica, 2007, Sc#602a



Wood Carving
Zimbabwe, 1996, Sc#764

This Zimbabwe stamp with a frog carving was issued in 1996. The word in the margin, *Ixoxo*, is the Zulu word for frog. No other information is available about the nature of the illustrated piece.