



Fig. 16

An Ethnic Jesus. Perhaps the best known and widely reproduced image of Jesus in the twentieth century, with over one billion reproductions mass-marketed around the world, Warner Sallman's *Head of Christ* (1940) depicts a serene Jesus with light skin, blue eyes, fair hair, and decidedly northern-European features. When Sallman painted more contemporary versions in the 1960s, he was concerned (as were his critics) that the portrait of Jesus not look too "feminine."⁶⁴ For a discussion of this and the following images see the article "Jesus and Cultures."



Fig. 17

A Scientific Reconstruction. The December 2002 issue of *Popular Mechanics* offered a portrait of Jesus created by forensic anthropologist Richard Neave, in its article "The Real Face of Jesus." Neave sought to base his image of Jesus on an objective, scientific basis rather than on the cultural predispositions of artists' imaginations. He relied on archaeological discoveries of Galilean skeletons from the first century CE, since according to the Gospels, Jesus' appearance was so similar to that of his disciples that he had to be singled out by Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:48-50 and parallels).



Fig. 18

Jesus of the People, 1999. Artist Janet McKenzie sought in her portrait to depict a Jesus widely representative of the world's people, especially the poor. The image incorporates symbols from Asian and Native American cultures; the model was an African-American woman. "The essence of the work," McKenzie declared, "is that Jesus is all of us." The portrait won the National Catholic Reporter Jesus 2000 competition; the judge wrote, "this is a haunting image of a peasant Jesus—dark, thick-lipped, looking out on us with ineffable dignity, with sadness but with confidence."

The earliest pictures of Jesus were very different from the images to which we are accustomed today. In a typical portrait from a fresco in the Roman catacomb of St. Priscilla (first to third century CE), Jesus is portrayed as a beardless youth surrounded by sheep. The portrait depicts Jesus as the Good Shepherd of John 8:11, but similar frescos showing Jesus with a lyre may allude as well to the biblical image of David—or to Orpheus, a figure from Greek mythology associated with the afterlife.



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

Still beardless, Jesus is depicted in this third-century mosaic in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, driving his chariot across the sky, in the figure of the sun god Apollo.

The style of portrait with which we are more familiar today—a bearded Jesus with long dark hair, parted in the center, seated on a heavenly throne and wielding a scepter as *Pantocrator* ("all-ruler")—first arose in the Christian Byzantine Empire, and reflects the fashion of the Byzantine court; *Pantocrator* was originally one of the titles of the Roman Emperor. This sixth-century mosaic is from the Church of St. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna.



Fig. 21



Fig. 22

Devon Cunningham's *Black Jesus* (1995) features a Black Christ as the heavenly *Pantocrator* ("All-Ruler") of Byzantine art. Mural at St. Cecilia's Catholic Church, Detroit.