

PREFACE

The chapters in this book originated from a symposium entitled *The Prehistory of Northwest Coast Indian Art* organized for the Northwest Studies Conference at Simon Fraser University in 1976. The prehistoric background to this art tradition had not really been explored since Harlan I. Smith's *An Album of Prehistoric Canadian Art* published in 1923, and Wilson Duff's *Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Fraser River and Gulf of Georgia* published in 1956, both of which predate the period of extensive archaeological excavations on the coast. In some minds there still lingered the question of whether the art tradition was prehistoric and not dependant on the introduction of iron and steel tools in quantity. Indeed, it is only now with the accumulation of archaeological information over the last twenty-five years from dated archaeological contexts that this question can be answered with confidence. The symposium concentrated on the contexts of both *time* and *meaning* for the Northwest Coast Art Tradition, and the chapters in this book are the expanded and re-written results of this concentration.

Many things have happened since the original symposium. Two of the participants have died, Wilson Duff in August, 1976 and Charles Borden in December, 1978. While Duff had agreed to prepare a written version of his paper from the conference tapes, this task was not done prior to his death, so the task of transcribing fell to me. His presentation was well prepared, and he had written a lengthy abstract, so this work was not as formidable as it might have been. An abbreviated transcription was given to the British Columbia Provincial Museum at their request for inclusion in the memorial volume to Duff, but the full text has not previously been published. Borden completed the revisions to his chapter the morning of his death, leaving only two illustrations to be pasted into his manuscript.

Erna Gunther, to whom this volume is specifically dedicated, as was the symposium which preceded it, has also died, in August, 1982. Her particular specialization was art and material culture and she not only inspired those of us who were her students (Suttles, Holm, Daugherty, Duff, Carlson) to investigate this fascinating subject area, but created the conditions at the university which made such study and research possible. Some of our students (Stryd, Friedman, Lundy) have continued this interest. For this we all thank her. Wilson Duff expressed his wish that his chapter also be dedicated to Viola Garfield, another of our professors from whom we learned so much about Northwest Coast Indian cultures. It is my understanding that a volume dedicated specifically to her is in preparation.

Bill Reid (Haida artist), Knut Fladmark and Philip Hobler (Simon Fraser University), Astrida Onat (Seattle Community College) and Patricia Severs (then, University of Alberta) served as discussants at our original symposium. Perhaps it is now time to get together again.

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